

# THE EARLY 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY



FORGOTTEN IMAGES

## PRE-READING TASKS

1. How had warfare changed in WWI compared to earlier wars?
2. What kind of people were fighting in WWI? What were the conditions like in the trenches?
3. What does the Latin phrase 'Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori' mean?



## THE SOLDIER by Rubert Brooke

If I should die, think only this of me:  
That there's some corner of a foreign field  
That is for ever England. There shall be  
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;  
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,  
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,  
A body of England's, breathing English air,  
Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.

And think, this heart, all evil shed away,  
A pulse in the eternal mind, no less  
Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;  
Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;  
And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,  
In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.

## DULCE ET DECORUM EST by Wilfred Owen

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,  
Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge,  
Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs  
And towards our distant rest began to trudge.  
Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots  
But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame; all blind;  
Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots  
Of tired, outstripped Five-Nines that dropped behind.

Gas! Gas! Quick, boys! — An ecstasy of fumbling,  
Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time;  
But someone still was yelling out and stumbling  
And flound'ring like a man in fire or lime...  
Dim, through the misty panes and thick green light,  
As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.

In all my dreams, before my helpless sight,  
He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.

If in some smothering dreams you too could pace  
Behind the wagon that we flung him in,  
And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,  
His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin;  
If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood  
Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,  
Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud  
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues, —  
My friend, you would not tell with such high zest  
To children ardent for some desperate glory,

The old Lie: *Dulce et decorum est*  
*Pro patria mori.*

## COMPREHENSION

1. What message does each poem convey? How is death represented in both poems?
2. How are the soldiers represented in both poems?
3. At what moment during the war do you think these poems were written?
4. How is England represented in "The Soldier"?
5. What effect does the gas attack have on the soldiers in "Dulce et decorum"?
6. In how far was warfare different from warfare in Roman times?
7. Explain the last two lines of "Dulce et decorum".
8. Comment on the poems' structures.

## ESSAY TOPICS

1. 'Never think that war, no matter how necessary, nor how justified, is not a crime.' (Ernest Hemingway) - Discuss.
2. 'You can no more win a war than you can win an earthquake.' (Jeannette Rankin, first woman in the United States Congress, she voted against the entry of The US into WWI) - Discuss.
3. 'War is only a cowardly escape from the problems of peace.' (Thomas Mann) - Discuss.

## PROJECT

### IN FLANDERS FIELDS by John McCrae

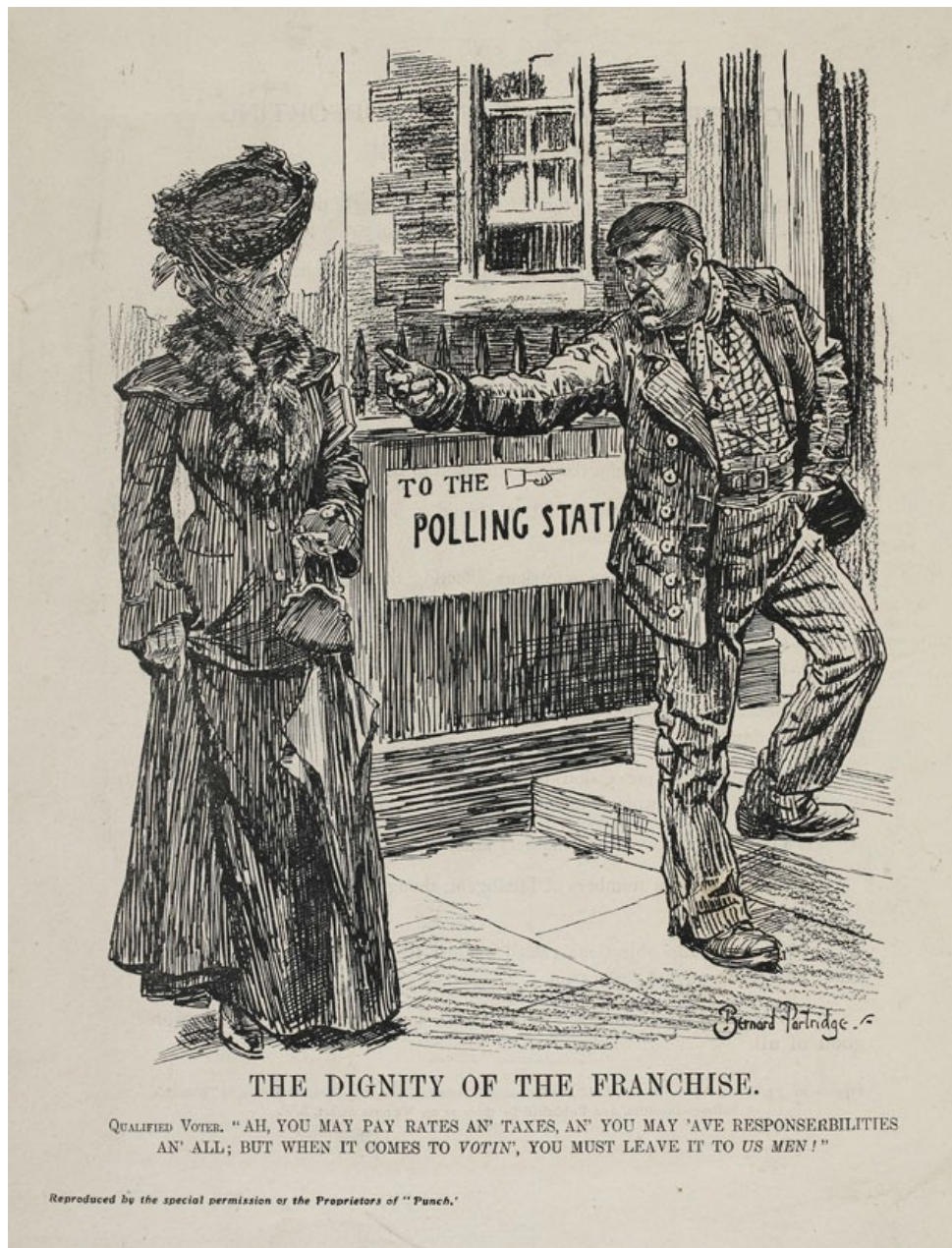
In Flanders fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row,  
That mark our place, and in the sky,  
The larks, still bravely singing, fly,  
Scarce heard amid the guns below.  
We are the dead; short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
Loved and were loved, and now we lie  
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe!  
To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch; be yours to hold it high!  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders fields.

1. Comment on the image of the poppy.
2. Find more WWI poems using the same image and compare their imagery to *In Flanders Fields*.
3. Do research on how the poppy became one of the most important images in British history.

## PRE-READING TASKS

1. What does the word 'suffragette' mean? What is it derived from?
2. How did the role of women change during WWI?
3. Describe in detail the situation depicted here. Look closely at the characters - their style of dress, body language, attitude, dialogue. What factors, other than gender, do you think the suffragettes are highlighting to strengthen their argument? Do you agree with this stance?



This cartoon was originally published in 1905 in *Punch*, a weekly magazine founded in 1841. The magazine was one of the most successful periodicals of its day, perhaps because of its satirical and humorous yet inoffensive interpretations of topical subjects, events and debates.

<http://www.bl.uk/learning/histcitizen/21cc/struggle/suffrage/sources/source1/punch.html>

## WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE

The struggle to achieve equal rights for women is often thought to have begun, in the English-speaking world, with the publication of Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792). During the 19th century, as male suffrage was gradually extended in many countries, women became increasingly active in the quest for their own suffrage. Not until 1893, however, in New Zealand, did women achieve suffrage on the national level. Australia followed in 1902, but American, British, and Canadian women did not win the same rights until the end of World War I.

The demand for the enfranchisement of American women was first seriously formulated at the Seneca Falls Convention (1848). After the Civil War, agitation by women for the ballot became increasingly vociferous. In 1869, however, a rift developed among feminists over the proposed 15th Amendment, which gave the vote to black men. Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and others refused to endorse the amendment because it did not give women the ballot. Other suffragists, however, including Lucy Stone and Julia Ward Howe, argued that once the black man was enfranchised, women would achieve their goal. As a result of the conflict, two organizations emerged. Stanton and Anthony formed the National Woman Suffrage Association to work for suffrage on the federal level and to press for more extensive institutional changes, such as the granting of property rights to married women. Stone created the American Woman Suffrage Association, which aimed to secure the ballot through state legislation. In 1890 the two groups united under the name National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA). In the same year Wyoming entered the Union, becoming the first state with general women's suffrage (which it had adopted as a territory in 1869).

As the pioneer suffragists began to withdraw from the movement because of age, younger women assumed leadership roles. One of the most politically astute was Carrie Chapman Catt, who was named president of NAWSA in 1915. Another prominent suffragist was Alice Paul. Forced to resign from NAWSA because of her insistence on the use of militant direct-action tactics, Paul organized the National Woman's Party, which used such

strategies as mass marches and hunger strikes. Perseverance on the part of both organizations eventually led to victory. On August 26, 1920, the 19th Amendment granted the ballot to American women.

In Great Britain the cause began to attract attention when the philosopher John Stuart Mill presented a petition in Parliament calling for inclusion of women's suffrage in the Reform Act of 1867. In the same year Lydia Becker (1827 –90) founded the first women's suffrage committee, in Manchester. Other committees were quickly formed, and in 1897 they united as the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, with Millicent Garret Fawcett (1847 –1929) as president. Like their American counterparts, the British suffragists struggled to overcome traditional values and prejudices. Frustrated by the prevailing social and political stalemate, some women became more militant. Emmeline Pankhurst, assisted by her daughters Christabel and Sylvia, founded the Women's Social and Political Union in 1903. Her followers, called "suffragettes," heckled politicians, practiced civil disobedience, and were frequently arrested for inciting riots. When World War I started, the proponents of women's suffrage ceased their activities and supported the war effort. In February 1918 women over the age of 30 received the right to vote. Suffrage rights for men and women were equalized in 1928.

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/suffrage/history.htm>

## COMPREHENSION

1. What is meant by 'male suffrage was gradually extended'?
2. How did the vote for black men divide the suffragettes in the USA?
3. What 'traditional values and prejudices' are being referred to here?
4. What methods did the suffragettes use to fight for the right to vote?

## ESSAY TOPICS

1. 'Universal suffrage is the only guarantee against despotism.' (May Wright Sewall, American suffragette) - Discuss.
2. 'The Bible and the Church have been the greatest stumbling blocks in the way of women's emancipation.' (Elizabeth Cady Stanton, American social activist, abolitionist, and leading figure of the early woman's movement) - Discuss.
3. 'A gender quota in the workplace would be the final step towards equality.' - Discuss.

## PROJECT

Analyse the pamphlet from 1913 below. Why were such leaflets published? According to this, why did women want to vote? Why could one say that they were really modest? What does the name of the president show you?

**B100.** REPRINTED—JULY, 1913.

## What does Women's Suffrage mean?

---

Some people think that Women's Suffrage means breaking windows and spoiling other people's property.

This is a great mistake. Only a small number of women do these violent actions.

Thousands and thousands of quiet law-abiding women are asking for the vote.

Why do they want it?

Not in order to sit in Parliament. It would not give them the right to do that.

They want it in order that they may be able to help choose the men who make the laws.

What are these laws about?

Many of them are about children, houses, wages, taxes, insurance, old-age pensions, and lots of other things which matter to women just as much as to men.

Don't you think it fair that a woman should be able to help decide how her children are to be educated, and what kind of home she is to live in?

Women want to help men to make this country a better place than it is for all the men and women and children in it.

In order that they should be able to do this, women ask men to help them get votes.

If you think it is fair that women should have votes, will you sign a card and become a "Friend of Women's Suffrage?"

There is nothing to pay, and your name will not be printed or used in any public way. We just want to know that you are a Friend in order that we may let you know when we have meetings and send you some of our papers.

Remember that we are a law-abiding, non-militant society, and that our work depends on Public sympathy.

### You can help us if you will!

Published by NATIONAL UNION OF WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE SOCIETIES,  
 President, Mrs. Henry Fawcett, LL.D.  
 Offices :—Parliament Chambers, 14, Great Smith Street, Westminster, London, S.W.  
**6d. per 100.**

---


Printed by **TEMPLAR PRINTING WORKS**, Edmund Street, Birmingham.

(<http://www.bl.uk/learning/histcitizen/21cc/struggle/suffrage/sources/source3/womenssuffrage.html>)

### PRE-READING TASKS

1. Look at the pictures and describe them in as much detail as possible.
2. What is meant by vote 'wet' or vote 'dry'?
3. Who is the person in the fourth picture? Why did he become well-known?

# TILL DEATH DO US PART



**Alcoholic Drinks Helped Break Up  
9,228 Homes Every Year  
184,568 in Twenty Years  
1887-1906**

*One in Every Three Husbands  
Divorced for Cruelty was  
Intemperate*

**Alcohol is an Enemy to the Home**

Marriage and Divorce Special Report U. S. Census Bureau, 1909, Part I.  
COPYRIGHT, 1912 BY SCIENTIFIC TEMPERANCE FEDERATION BOSTON, MASS. PUBLISHED BY AMERICAN ISSUE PUBLISHING COMPANY WESTERVILLE, OHIO.  
NO. 17

# "WET" OR "DRY"

"VOTE WET FOR MY SAKE!"

"VOTE DRY FOR MINE!"



Shall the Mothers and Children be Sacrificed to the Financial Greed of the Liquor Traffic?

**IT IS UP TO YOU, VOTER, TO DECIDE**

# VOTE DRY



## THE PROHIBITION: THE NOBLE EXPERIMENT

When the Prohibition era in the United States began on January 19, 1920, a few sage observers predicted it would not go well. Certainly, previous attempts to outlaw the use of alcohol in American history had fared poorly. Now, Prohibition was being implemented on a national scale, and being enshrined in the Constitution no less. What followed was a litany of unintended consequences.

This should have come as no surprise with a venture as experimental as Prohibition. It is no mistake that President Herbert Hoover's 1928 description of Prohibition as "a great social and economic experiment, noble in motive and far-reaching in purpose" entered the popular lexicon as "the noble experiment." It was unfortunate for the entire nation that the experiment failed as miserably as it did.

Prohibition's supporters were initially surprised by what did not come to pass during the dry era. When the law went into effect, they expected sales of clothing and household goods to skyrocket. Real estate developers and landlords expected rents to rise as saloons closed and neighborhoods improved. Chewing gum, grape juice, and soft drink companies all expected growth. Theater producers expected new crowds as Americans looked for new ways to entertain themselves without alcohol. None of it came to pass. Instead, the unintended consequences proved to be a decline in amusement and entertainment industries across the board. Restaurants failed, as they could no longer make a profit without legal liquor sales. Theater revenues declined rather than increase, and few of the other economic benefits that had been predicted came to pass.

On the whole, the initial economic effects of Prohibition were largely negative. The closing of breweries, distilleries and saloons led to the elimination of thousands of jobs, and in turn thousands more jobs were eliminated for barrel makers, truckers, waiters, and other related trades. The unintended economic consequences of Prohibition didn't stop there. One of the most profound effects of Prohibition was on government tax revenues. Before Prohibition, many states relied heavily on excise taxes in liquor sales to fund their budgets. In New York, almost 75% of the state's revenue was

derived from liquor taxes. With Prohibition in effect, that revenue was immediately lost. At the national level, Prohibition cost the federal government a total of \$11 billion in lost tax revenue, while costing over \$300 million to enforce. The most lasting consequence was that many states and the federal government would come to rely on income tax revenue to fund their budgets going forward.

Prohibition led to many more unintended consequences because of the cat and mouse nature of Prohibition enforcement. While the Eighteenth Amendment prohibited the manufacture, sale and transportation of intoxicating beverages, it did not outlaw the possession or consumption of alcohol in the United States. The Volstead Act, the federal law that provided for the enforcement of Prohibition, also left enough loopholes and quirks that it opened the door to myriad schemes to evade the dry mandate.

One of the legal exceptions to the Prohibition law was that pharmacists were allowed to dispense whiskey by prescription for any number of ailments, ranging from anxiety to influenza. Bootleggers quickly discovered that running a pharmacy was a perfect front for their trade. As a result, the number of registered pharmacists in New York State tripled during the Prohibition era. Because Americans were also allowed to obtain wine for religious purposes, enrollments rose at churches and synagogues, and cities saw a large increase in the number of self-professed rabbis who could obtain wine for their congregations.

The law was unclear when it came to Americans making wine at home. With a wink and a nod, the American grape industry began selling kits of juice concentrate with warnings not to leave them sitting too long or else they could ferment and turn into wine. Home stills were technically illegal, but Americans found they could purchase them at many hardware stores, while instructions for distilling could be found in public libraries in pamphlets issued by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The law that was meant to stop Americans from drinking was instead turning many of them into experts on how to make it.

The trade in unregulated alcohol had serious consequences for public health. As the trade in illegal alcohol became more lucrative, the quality of

alcohol on the black market declined. On average, 1000 Americans died every year during the Prohibition from the effects of drinking tainted liquor.

The effects of Prohibition on law enforcement were also negative. The sums of money being exchanged during the dry era proved a corrupting influence in both the federal Bureau of Prohibition and at the state and local level. Police officers and Prohibition agents alike were frequently tempted by bribes or the lucrative opportunity to go into bootlegging themselves. Many stayed honest, but enough succumbed to the temptation that the stereotype of the corrupt Prohibition agent or local cop undermined public trust in law enforcement for the duration of the era.

The growth of the illegal liquor trade under Prohibition made criminals of millions of Americans. As the decade progressed, court rooms and jails overflowed, and the legal system failed to keep up. Many defendants in prohibition cases waited over a year to be brought to trial. As the backlog of cases increased, the judicial system turned to the "plea bargain" to clear hundreds of cases at a time, making it a common practice in American jurisprudence for the first time.

The greatest unintended consequence of Prohibition however, was the plainest to see. For over a decade, the law that was meant to foster temperance instead fostered intemperance and excess. The solution the United States had devised to address the problem of alcohol abuse had instead made the problem even worse. The statistics of the period are notoriously unreliable, but it is very clear that in many parts of the United States more people were drinking, and people were drinking more.

There is little doubt that Prohibition failed to achieve what it set out to do, and that its unintended consequences were far more far reaching than its few benefits. The ultimate lesson is two-fold. Watch out for solutions that end up worse than the problems they set out to solve, and remember that the Constitution is no place for experiments, noble or otherwise.

*By Michael Lerner, historian (adapted)*

## COMPREHENSION

1. Why did Hoover describe Prohibition as a 'noble experiment'?
2. What were the economic effects of Prohibition?
3. Why did the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment and the Volstead Act not lead to a dry nation?
4. What were the worst consequences of Prohibition?

## ESSAY TOPICS

1. 'Every form of addiction is bad, no matter whether the narcotic be alcohol or morphine or idealism.' (Carl Jung) - Discuss
2. 'Our national drug is alcohol. We tend to regard the use any other drug with special horror.' (William S. Burroughs) – Discuss
3. 'In a closed society where everybody's guilty, the only crime is getting caught. In a world of thieves, the only final sin is stupidity.' (Hunter S. Thompson, American journalist and author) – Discuss

## PROJECT

Visit <http://www.oldmagazinearticles.com>, where you can find authentic articles written during the Prohibition period. In groups of threes select one article, summarise it and present it to your classmates.

## PRE-READING TASKS

1. What were the '20s famous for? How had people's lifestyles changed?
2. How did women's attitudes change?
3. Who was concerned about these changes?



## COMPREHENSION

1. Describe the flappers' fashion style.
2. What was, however, more important to those young women than making a fashion statement?
3. How were society structures changing in the 1920s?
4. Although they experienced new liberties, those young women were still confronted with restrictions. Explain.
5. Could you give a definition of 'flapper'?

## ESSAY TOPICS

1. 'I have yet to hear a man ask for advice on how to combine marriage and a career.' (Gloria Steinem, American journalist and feminist) - Discuss.
2. 'You know, the period of World War I and the Roaring Twenties were really just about the same as today. You worked, and you made a living if you could, and you tried to make the best of things [...] It was a struggle.' (James Cagney, American actor) - Discuss.
3. 'Women with money and women in power are two uncomfortable ideas in our society.' (Candace Bushnell, American author) - Discuss.

## THE NEW YORK TIMES

July 2, 1922; page 74

## HER ETERNAL YOUTH

Spirit That Created Flapper Will Not Surrender to

Elders, Though Skirts Are Lengthened—

How a Sub-Deb. Puts It

**K**NEES may be covered, but the young spirit is here to stay. Youthful insurgents are busily refuting the assertions from Paris that the flapper is passing out with the abbreviated skirt. Dictators of fashions and of morals appear, in fact, to know very little about the habits, ideals and aspirations of the young person between eighteen and twenty-four. That these dictators should think that with the passing of the short skirt and bobbed hair this eager young army of self-determination which has been gradually throwing off the hampering mantle of dependence and parental dominance will be content to be relegated to the ranks of the negligible female of thirty years ago is proof, it is said, of their limited knowledge of the situation.

"Never," cry in unison the emancipated army. That the weapons of this twentieth century legion are in large part youth and determination adds strength to the cause. The joyous members argue that their detractors are handicapped by years and compromise. With eyes fixed on the sun, the onrushing host gives small credence to prophecies of failure.

From the flippant young thing to the more serious-minded young person who eagerly builds herself a career after she has finished her college course there seems to be a spirit of independence and of fearlessness that has nothing whatever to do with a new fashion in hair arrangement or an increased length of skirt. Both her admirers and her maligners admit that she has given the exponents of self-expression a tremendous boost. There is nothing secretive about the modern girl. The planks in her platform are frankness, common sense and comfort. She refuses to wear uncomfortable clothes because her grandmother considers them ladylike. When conventions interfere with comfort, conventions must go, asserts the flapper. Her teachers and professors give her credit for sense and decision. They tell you she is neither bad, nor is she different from the young of other years.

**Her Struggle for "Freedom."**

One of the emancipated ones, with a Knickerbocker grandmother and much family opposition behind her "adventure into the open," in telling of her struggle for freedom, said:

"I worked during the war, of course—every one did. And I decided then that never again would I be content to sit at home and do nothing but go to parties. It was hard work at first to get my people to understand how I felt about it. But I finally succeeded. I've been here two years. Now I want a better job. I want more money and I think I'm worth it. Jobs are awfully hard to get, though. I do not want my

friends to help me if I can manage to get a better position without their assistance.

"Several of my friends have gone to work because they were so bored at home. One of them is a saleswoman in a smart costume shop. She's been having lots of fun with some of the snobbish friends of her rich family connections. These snobbish ones haven't got used to the 'working girl' idea yet.

"No, I don't think I shall give up working when I marry. It seems to me that you understand the 'tired business man' much better when you have been a 'tired business woman.' It's not very easy being at a desk all day. I certainly wouldn't expect my husband to take me to late parties every night, which seems to be what wives who have never worked do expect.

"It's perfectly true that manners have gone out with a certain crowd. Now, when a boy has consideration and a rather formal nice manner, the younger set put him down as a 'sissy.' These days a man grabs you at a dance without saying a word, whirls you almost off your feet, then drops you still without a word and goes on to another girl. If a girl doesn't appear to like that abrupt way of doing things, the boys think she's 'queer.'"

**Spirit of Younger Generation.**

To many of those of flapper age the bare knees, Shelley hair and extreme manners of some of their contemporaries are as ridiculous as these hallmarks of the new freedom are to the older generation. According to one college girl, the flapper is the girl who is just a little younger, who belongs to a younger set. To the girl one year out of college, the graduate is a flapper. To the proud senior of a preparatory school the girl just entering is a flapper.

"Yes," said the secretary of one of the college women's clubs in New York City, "we refer to the new arrivals here, the girls who have just graduated, as flappers. And they in turn call the freshmen at college flappers. There doesn't seem to be any exact definition for the species. No girl admits being a flapper. It seems to me it would be better if the older people tried to understand the spirit of the younger generation before they criticized them so freely. Has there been such a change after all? I read some of my aunt's love letters the other day and I must say that I don't think the so-called young flapper today has anything on auntie.

"There were much franker thoughts expressed in those letters than I have been allowed to believe the older generation ever had. That seems to be the criticism of the modern girl—that she is immodestly frank.

"There have always been girls who were just a step ahead of the times—

girls who were loud, a little overdressed and a good bit over-mannered. You find those girls today. But I think they are very much in the minority. Most of the girls as they leave college and come to this club have some idea what they want to do. They all want to work. If they find they can't get a job unless they know stenography, they buckle down and learn it. Stenography is one thing they hate. But nine jobs out of ten offered to girls just starting out in the business world today require stenography. And of course some professions are still practically closed to women. I wanted to study engineering but I found that none of the college courses in that subject were open to women."

It remained for the sub-deb to ignore the existence of the flapper. One of them who had just graduated from a well-known preparatory school and enters Smith College next fall said that the word was never used in her set.

**"Just a Magazine Word."**

"We think of it as just a magazine word," said this modern exponent of emancipated thought. "We never call each other flappers. In fact, the girls I know resent being put in that class. And they aren't prudes either. They are just as eager for a good time and a free life as any set of girls. Some of them are planning to work when they finish college, but I don't think 50 per cent. of the girls who enter college have any definite plans for a career. That comes later. Many of them go to work when they graduate because they live in small towns and do not want to go home and settle down.

"No, I don't think the girls today think less about getting married than they ever did. They are shy in expressing their views some times, or indifferent, but most of them have it in the back of their minds just the same."

But whether the young girl today just entering her teens, is a flapper or not, hers is the inquiring mind which is not to be satisfied with ready-made formulas, either in fashions or morals. What has been good enough for her parents is not always good enough for her. At least she must decide whether it is. That the arbiters of fashion would wipe her aggressive silhouette entirely off the canvas is of small interest to her. After all, she tells you, skirts may go down and morals may go up in the minds of the public, but she will continue to arrange both her skirts and her morals so that they will neither interfere with her comfort nor outrage her common sense. The young mind appears to be canny and the young spirit above the contemplation of bare knees. This young spirit is busy building its future; it is leaving less important matters to the older generation.

## PROJECT

This is an extract from F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. Find out at what time it was written and situate the story. When and where is it set? Then read the extract and answer the questions below.

There was music from my neighbour's house through the summer nights. In his blue gardens men and girls came and went like moths among the whisperings and the champagne and the stars. At high tide in the afternoon I watched his guests diving from the tower of his raft, or taking the sun on the hot sand of his beach while his two motor-boats slit the waters of the Sound, drawing aquaplanes over cataracts of foam. On week-ends his Rolls-Royce became an omnibus, bearing parties to and from the city between nine in the morning and long past midnight, while his station wagon scampered like a brisk yellow bug to meet all trains. And on Mondays eight servants, including an extra gardener, toiled all day with mops and scrubbing-brushes and hammers and garden-shears, repairing the ravages of the night before.

Every Friday five crates of oranges and lemons arrived from a fruiterer in New York - every Monday these same oranges and lemons left his back door in a pyramid of pulpless halves. There was a machine in the kitchen which could extract the juice of two hundred oranges in half an hour if a little button was pressed two hundred times by a butler's thumb.

At least once a fortnight a corps of caterers came down with several hundred feet of canvas and enough coloured lights to make a Christmas tree of Gatsby's enormous garden. On buffet tables, garnished with glistening hors-d'oeuvre, spiced baked hams crowded against salads of harlequin designs and pastry pigs and turkeys bewitched to a dark gold. In the main hall a bar with a real brass rail was set up, and stocked with gins and liquors and with cordials so long forgotten that most of his female guests were too young to know one from another.

By seven o'clock the orchestra has arrived, no thin five-piece affair, but a whole pitful of oboes and trombones and saxophones and viols and coronets and piccolos, and low and high drums. The last swimmers have come in from the beach now and are dressing upstairs; the cars from New York are parked five deep in the drive, and already the halls and salons and verandas are

gaudy with primary colours, and hair bobbed in strange new ways, and shawls beyond the dreams of Castile. The bar is in full swing, and floating rounds of cocktails permeate the garden outside, until the air is alive with chatter and laughter, and casual innuendo and introductions forgotten on the spot, and enthusiastic meetings between women who never knew each other's names.

The lights grow brighter as the earth lurches away from the sun, and now the orchestra is playing yellow cocktail music, and the opera of voices pitches a key lighter. Laughter is easier minute by minute, spilled with prodigality, tipped out at a cheerful word. The groups change more swiftly, swell with new arrivals, dissolve and form in the same breath; already there are wanderers, confident girls who weave here and there among the stouter and more stable, become for a sharp, joyous moment the centre of a group, and then, excited with triumph, glide on through the sea-change of faces and voices with colour under the constantly changing light.

Suddenly one of these gypsies, in trembling opal, seizes a cocktail out of the air, dumps it down for courage and, moving her hands like Frisco, dances out alone on the canvas platform. A momentary hush; the orchestra leader varies his rhythm obligingly for her, and there is a burst of chatter as the erroneous news goes around that she is Gilda Gray's understudy from the Follies. The party has begun.

1. What were the necessary components to such parties?
2. Describe the atmosphere created at the parties.
3. In how far is this illustration typical for the '20s?

## PRE-READING TASKS

1. What financial measures were decided in the Treaty of Versailles?
2. How did the US economy develop after World War One?
3. Does the expression 'Black Tuesday' mean anything to you?
4. Can you draw any parallels to the 2008 recession? What were its consequences?



## THE GREAT DEPRESSION

The Great Depression was an economic slump in North America, Europe, and other industrialized areas of the world that began in 1929 and lasted until about 1939. It was the longest and most severe depression ever experienced by the industrialized Western world.

Though the U.S. economy had gone into depression six months earlier, the Great Depression may be said to have begun with a catastrophic collapse of stock-market prices on the New York Stock Exchange in October 1929. During the next three years stock prices in the United States continued to fall, until by late 1932 they had dropped to only about 20 percent of their value in 1929. Besides ruining many thousands of individual investors, this precipitous decline in the value of assets greatly strained banks and other financial institutions, particularly those holding stocks in their portfolios. Many banks were consequently forced into insolvency; by 1933, 11,000 of the United States' 25,000 banks had failed. The failure of so many banks, combined with

a general and nationwide loss of confidence in the economy, led to much-reduced levels of spending and demand and hence of production, thus aggravating the downward spiral. The result was drastically falling output and drastically rising unemployment; by 1932, U.S. manufacturing output had fallen to 54 percent of its 1929 level, and unemployment had risen to between 12 and 15 million workers, or 25-30 percent of the work force.

The Great Depression began in the United States but quickly turned into a worldwide economic slump owing to the special and intimate relationships that had been forged between the United States and European economies after World War I. The United States had emerged from the war as the major creditor and financier of postwar Europe, whose national economies had been greatly weakened by the war itself, by war debts, and, in the case of Germany and other defeated nations, by the need to pay war reparations. So once the American economy slumped and the flow of American investment credits to Europe dried up, prosperity tended to collapse there as well. The Depression hit hardest those nations that were most deeply indebted to the United States, i.e., Germany and Great Britain. In Germany, unemployment rose sharply beginning in late 1929, and by early 1932 it had reached 6 million workers, or 25 percent of the work force. Britain was less severely affected, but its industrial and export sectors remained seriously depressed until World War II. Many other countries had been affected by the slump by 1931.

Almost all nations sought to protect their domestic production by imposing tariffs, raising existing ones, and setting quotas on foreign imports. The effect of these restrictive measures was to greatly reduce the volume of international trade: by 1932 the total value of world trade had fallen by more than half as country after country took measures against the importation of foreign goods.

The Great Depression had important consequences in the political sphere. In the United States, economic distress led to the election of the Democrat Franklin D. Roosevelt to the presidency in late 1932. Roosevelt introduced a number of major changes in the structure of the American economy, using increased government regulation and massive public-works projects to promote a recovery. But despite this active intervention, mass

unemployment and economic stagnation continued, though on a somewhat reduced scale, with about 15 percent of the work force still unemployed in 1939 at the outbreak of World War II. After that, unemployment dropped rapidly as American factories were flooded with orders from overseas for armaments and munitions. The depression ended completely soon after the United States' entry into World War II in 1941. In Europe, the Great Depression strengthened extremist forces and lowered the prestige of liberal democracy. In Germany, economic distress directly contributed to Adolf Hitler's rise to power in 1933. The Nazis' public-works projects and their rapid expansion of munitions production ended the Depression there by 1936.

At least in part, the Great Depression was caused by underlying weaknesses and imbalances within the U.S. economy that had been obscured by the boom psychology and speculative euphoria of the 1920s. The Depression exposed those weaknesses, as it did the inability of the nation's political and financial institutions to cope with the vicious downward economic cycle that had set in by 1930. Prior to the Great Depression, governments traditionally took little or no action in times of business downturn, relying instead on impersonal market forces to achieve the necessary economic correction. But market forces alone proved unable to achieve the desired recovery in the early years of the Great Depression, and this painful discovery eventually inspired some fundamental changes in the United States' economic structure. After the Great Depression, government action, whether in the form of taxation, industrial regulation, public works, social insurance, social-welfare services, or deficit spending, came to assume a principal role in ensuring economic stability in most industrial nations with market economies.

<http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/depression/about.htm>

## COMPREHENSION

1. What happened at the New York Stock Exchange in October 1929? What were the consequences?
2. How did this situation affect Europe?
3. How was international trade affected?
4. How did the great Depression lead to political changes?
5. How did politics' attitude towards the economy change in the US?

## ESSAY TOPICS

1. 'The other thing is quality of life; if you have a place where you can go and have a picnic with your family, it doesn't matter if it's a recession or not, you can include that in your quality of life.' (Jim Fowler, American zoologist) - Discuss.
2. 'It's a recession when your neighbour loses his job; it's a depression when you lose yours.' (Harry S. Truman) - Discuss.
3. 'Whether one agrees or disagrees with the tactics of the Occupy Wall Street movement, it's easy to understand the inspiration for its anger as well as its impatience.' (Eric Alterman, American historian and journalist) - Discuss.

## PROJECT

Find out which US companies managed to survive the Great Depression and have a look at the measures they employed to do so. Are those methods companies could profit from nowadays as well?

## GLOSSARY

Act	
Amendment	
armistice	
austerity (measures)	
ballot	
casualties	
debts	
depression (The Great Depression)	
decline	
economic	
economical	
election	
emancipation	
enrolment	
flapper	
gender	
gender quota	
home front	
indebted	
international trade	
narcotic	
poll	
polling station	
poppy	
prohibition (The Prohibition)	
recession	
recruitment	
redundancy	
restrictive measures	
shares	
shortage	
stocks	
stock exchange	
suffrage	
suffragette	
tank	
treaty	
trenches	
truce (ceasefire)	
unemployment	
warfare	