

**CHAPTER 13** Section 3 (pages 446–451)

# Education and Popular Culture

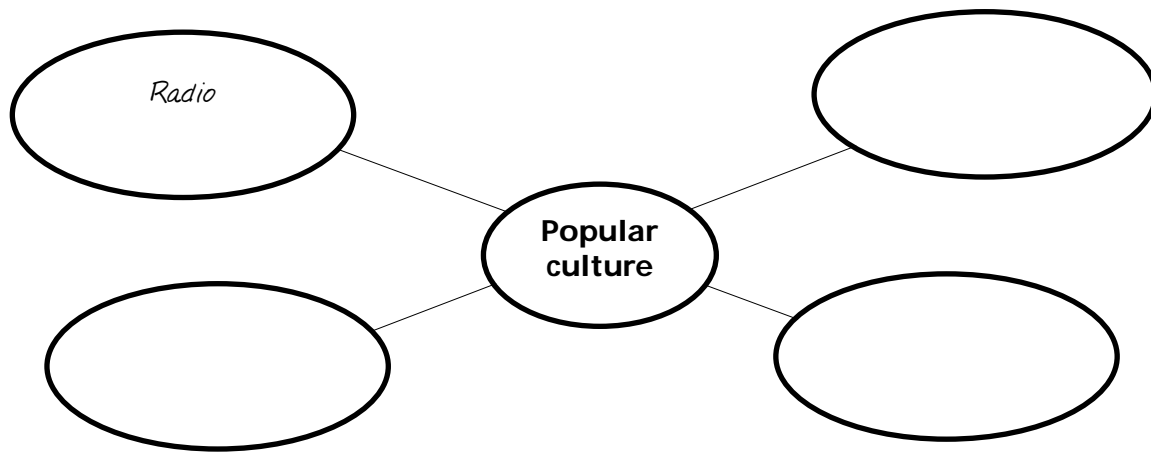
## BEFORE YOU READ

In the last section, you learned about women in the 1920s.

In this section, you will read about education and popular culture during the 1920s.

## AS YOU READ

Use the web below to take notes on the factors that helped create American popular culture in the 1920s.



### TERMS AND NAMES

**Charles A. Lindbergh** First person to fly solo across the Atlantic

**George Gershwin** Composer

**Georgia O'Keeffe** Artist

**Sinclair Lewis** Novelist

**F. Scott Fitzgerald** Novelist

**Edna St. Vincent Millay** Poet

**Ernest Hemingway** Novelist

## Schools and the Mass Media Shape Culture (pages 446–448)

### *How did popular culture change in America?*

America was becoming more prosperous. Business and industry required a more educated work force. These two factors caused a huge increase in the number of students going to high school. In 1914, only 1 million American students went to high school after elementary school. In 1926, the number was nearly 4 million.

Schools changed as they grew. Before the 1920s, high schools were mostly for students who were going on to college. In the twenties, high schools had a wide range of students. Schools

offered vocational, or work-related, training for industrial jobs. They offered home economics courses for future homemakers.

High schools also saw an increase in the number of children of immigrants. Many of these students did not speak English. Even so, the nation's schools were successful in teaching large numbers of Americans to read.

As a result of increased *literacy*, more people read newspapers than before. Newspaper circulation rose. Big city papers and newspaper chains swallowed up small town newspapers.

National magazines were also popular. Some of them delivered the news. Other magazines published fiction and articles.

The most powerful of the *mass media* was radio. Radio networks with stations in many cities were formed in the twenties. The networks did research to find out what people wanted to hear—and gave it to them. Radio networks created something new in America: the shared national experience of hearing things as they happened. By 1930, 40 percent of American households had radios.

1. What was an effect of increased literacy in the United States?

---

## America Chases New Heroes and Old Dreams (pages 448–451)

### *Who was Charles Lindbergh?*

In the 1920s, Americans had more money and more free time than ever before. *Fads*, including puzzles and games, swept the nation. People also spent a great deal of money at sports events.

The twenties were called the Golden Age of Sports. Many talented athletes set new records. These athletes were portrayed as superheroes by the media. They became heroes to many Americans.

**Charles A. Lindbergh** thrilled the nation by becoming the first person to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean. Lindbergh took off from New York City in his plane, *The Spirit of St. Louis*. After 33 hours, Lindbergh landed outside of Paris, France. On his return to the United States, Lindbergh became the idol of America. In an age of sensationalism and excess, Lindbergh stood for the honesty and bravery the nation seemed to have lost.

Even before the introduction of sound, movies became a national pastime. *The Jazz Singer*, the first movie with sound, was released in 1927. Walt Disney's *Steamboat Willie*, the first animated film with sound was made the next year. By 1930, the "talkies" had caused movie attendance to double.

In the 1920s, American artists broke away from European traditions. Eugene O'Neill wrote plays about the confusion of modern American life. Composer **George Gershwin** merged jazz with

traditional elements creating music with a new American sound.

American painters recorded the America they saw and felt. Edward Hopper painted the loneliness of American life. **Georgia O'Keeffe** showed the grandeur of New York City. She later became famous for her paintings of the Southwest.

Many gifted American writers criticized American society. **Sinclair Lewis** was the first American to win a Nobel Prize for Literature. His novels *Main Street* and *Babbitt* made fun of middle-class America's *conformity* and *materialism*.

Novelist **F. Scott Fitzgerald** coined the term "Jazz Age" to describe the twenties. His books, such as *This Side of Paradise* and *The Great Gatsby*, showed the negative side of the age. But the poems of **Edna Vincent Millay** celebrated youth and freedom from traditional restrictions.

Some Americans disliked American culture so much they went to live abroad. Many gathered in Paris. The writer Gertrude Stein called them the Lost Generation. They included Fitzgerald and **Ernest Hemingway**. Hemingway introduced a tough, simple style of writing that changed American literature.

2. Why did Lindbergh become an American idol?