

Complex Writing

Question: To what extent was the 1920's an era of prosperity and progress for America?

Response:

To a large extent, the 1920's was an era of optimism and progress for America. **To be sure**, there were some areas of American society and the economy that did not experience progress. Those people involved in the agricultural sector didn't share in the twenties' financial success, as overproduction and trade barriers prevented them from achieving prosperity. Racism was rampant in this period, and was evident with the re-emergence of the Ku Klux Klan and increasing restrictions on immigration. **Also**, organized crime grew dramatically as a response to prohibition. **Nevertheless**, many areas of society and the economy did experience spectacular growth and development during the 1920's. A new youth-oriented culture emerged; it emphasized greater freedom - like less restrictive clothing for women - and embraced the African-American music called jazz. Mass entertainment became a major industry, as the radio and the cinema became very popular. These two technologies allowed Americans to share a common experience, and **therefore** contributed to a much more unified national culture. Culturally speaking, all of these innovations would become a permanent part of American society. The economy **also** grew as people took advantage of the opportunity to buy on credit. People were able to afford more consumer goods, because advances in mass production made products like automobiles and radios more affordable. This increase in industrial production led to higher levels of employment and higher wages for employees. **Even though there were many negative aspects to the 1920's, the areas where progress occurred were more significant. The freer culture and prosperous economy allowed America's citizens a higher standard of living than ever before.**