

The 1920s

Volume 1

A Journey Through Time Special Edition

Los Angeles Booms

Los Angeles now leads the nation in population growth. How strange it seems when only 50 years ago Los Angeles was a frontier town with a population of 16,000 people. Today, the city boasts a population of over 1,000,000 people. Sources tell us that about 350 people settle here each day. Why are people



City Traveling

Most people ask for suggestions when traveling in downtown Los Angeles. If you do not want to get stuck in a traffic jam or search endlessly for a parking space we suggest you take the streetcar. The streetcar, which is also called the Red Car, goes just about everywhere. Try it. It beats waiting in traffic!

See the Stars

See where your favorite film star lives. Don Belding of Lord and Thomas Advertising Agency has published a booklet containing the addresses of 65 of the most popular movie stars living in Hollywood. This booklet will go on sale today on downtown newsstands.

Armstrong at the Biltmore

Jazz musician Louis Armstrong will play Friday night at the Biltmore Hotel in Los Angeles. This is one show you do not want to miss especially if you like to dance the Charleston.

Walter Temple Builds New House in Puente

Walter Temple, the grandson of pioneer William Workman, has constructed a beautiful new home on the Workman Homestead. Called *La Casa Nueva* or "the new house", it is built in the Spanish style and is already being compared to the homes of famous movie stars in Hollywood. A map showing the location of where the movie stars live may have to include *La Casa Nueva* in Puente. No other mansion we have seen compares to its beauty. If you go to Puente you must stop by and take a look.

Clara Bow Startles Fans

Clara Bow was seen last night in Hollywood with a "bobbed" haircut. In addition to her new hairstyle she wore one of the shortest dresses we have ever seen in women's fashions. It is quite shocking to see women with "bobbed" hair, but now short skirts and dresses?

Pop-Up Toaster Invented

The McGraw Electric Company has invented a marvelous new toaster which pops-up your bread when it is toasted. The company also manufactures other labor-saving electrical appliances such as waffle molds and percolators.

A Journey Through Time Homestead Museum Copyright 1996 Historical Resources Inc. All rights reserved.

The 1920s Lesson Plan

Objective:

1. Students will be able to describe life in the Los Angeles region during the 1920s.

Time: 30-45 minutes

Materials:

1. "The 1920s" decade overview.
2. "The 1920s" decade worksheet.

Directions:

1. Explain to students that they will be studying three important decades that brought about a lot of change to the Los Angeles region, as well as California and the nation. Through the study of these decades students will discover how people's lives have changed over time and how we are still affected by these changes today.

2. To begin the lesson, **review** the definition of "decade" with your students. Mention that each decade in history is often marked by unique events and trends. Have students brainstorm some of the unique events and trends of the current decade (e.g., discoveries, inventions, music, fashion, dance-styles, etc.). Remind students that these changes occur gradually and not automatically on January 1 of a new decade.

3. **Distribute** "The 1920s" decade overview and worksheet.

4. Share the background information to **introduce** the 1920s to the students. Once completed, have students **read** "The 1920s" decade overview individually, in pairs, groups, or as a class. Have students pay particular attention to the vocabulary words, which are in bold.

5. When finished have students **complete** the decade worksheet using the information found in the decade overview sheet.

Background information: It was exciting to be in Los Angeles in the 1920s. The population within the city was approximately 1 million by the end of the decade, and the big businesses in the area were movies, real estate, and oil. It was during this decade that women won the right to vote and began getting bobbed haircuts. People traveled by airplane or car; everyone was going to the movies or listening to the radio, which broadcasted a variety of programs from baseball games, to plays, to jazz music; and a new dance craze, the Charleston, was sweeping the nation.

Additional activities:

1. **Writing exercise:** Ask students to imagine they are a movie star or tourist. Have them write a letter to a friend on the East Coast of the United States describing California in the 1920s.
2. **Role-play:** Have students imagine they are a movie star or tourist. Have the students interview one another about their work or places to visit in Los Angeles.
3. **Research:** Have students compare and contrast what is happening in California to what is happening in another state in the 1920s.

The 1920s

Volume 3

Ain't We Got Fun Special Edition

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Los Angeles? It is our nearly perfect climate and jobs. Most people can find a job in the real estate, oil, or movie **industry**. What other city can offer sunshine and wealth?

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Film star Clara Bow was seen last night in Hollywood with a "**bobbed**" haircut. In addition to her new hairstyle she wore one of the shortest dresses we have ever seen in women's fashions. It is quite shocking to see women with short hair, but now skirts and dresses that reveal their knees?

Pop-Up Toaster Invented

The McGraw Electric Company has invented a marvelous new toaster that pops your bread up when it is toasted. The company also manufactures other time-saving electrical **appliances** like waffle molds and percolators.

Name _____

The 1920s

The 1920s brought much growth to California. Use the decade overview sheet to find the answers to the following questions.

1. Write the letter of the word on the left with it's meaning on the right.

- | | | |
|----------------|-------|---|
| a. Industry | _____ | A short haircut |
| b. Jazz | _____ | A type of dance |
| c. Charleston | _____ | A popular form of music |
| d. Bobbed hair | _____ | A machine in the home that helps save time |
| e. Appliances | _____ | A business like real estate, oil, or the movies |

2. How many people lived in Los Angeles in the 1920s? _____

3. What types of jobs were people coming to California to work in?

4. What new transportation could take you around downtown Los Angeles faster?

5. What new appliance was invented in the 1920s?

6. Who invented this new appliance?

7. What other appliances do they make?

8. Name two things you could do for fun in Los Angeles during the 1920s.

Name Answer Key

The 1920s

The 1920s brought much growth to California. Use the decade overview sheet to find the answers to the following questions.

11. Write the letter of the word on the left with it's meaning on the right.

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| a. Industry | <u>D</u> A short haircut |
| b. Jazz | <u>C</u> A type of dance |
| c. Charleston | <u>B</u> A popular form of music |
| d. Bobbed hair | <u>E</u> A machine in the home that helps save time |
| e. Appliances | <u>A</u> A business like real estate, oil, or the movies |

2. How many people lived in Los Angeles in the 1920s? Over 1 million

3. What types of jobs were people coming to California to work in?

Real estate, oil, and the movie industry

4. What new transportation could take you around downtown Los Angeles faster?

Streetcar or Red Car

5. What new appliance was invented in the 1920s?

Pop-up toaster

6. Who invented this new appliance?

McGraw Electric Company

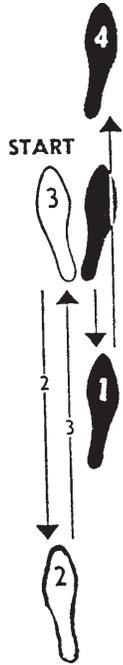
7. What other appliances do they make?

Waffle molds and percolators

8. Name two things you could do for fun in Los Angeles during the 1920s.

Any two of the following: ride the Red Car, see a movie star's home, listen to jazz music, or dance the Charleston.

How to Dance the Charleston



The Charleston, first introduced in 1924, quickly became the most popular dance of the 1920s. It is the perfect dance for jazz or Dixieland music written in 4/4 time. Try dancing to one of these popular 1920s tunes: "Charleston" or "Yes Sir! That's My Baby."

Now that you have found the music, it is time to learn the basic Charleston step—the kick. The step involves four steps, one step to each count of a 4/4 measure of music. Start with your feet together.

1. **Step back** with your **right** foot.
2. **Kick back** with your **left** foot.
3. **Step forward** with your **left foot** to original position.
4. **Kick forward** with your **right** foot.
5. **Repeat:** Return to step 1 where you step back with your right foot.

The arms also play an important role in dancing the Charleston. Try holding your arms straight out from your body and bending them at your elbows with hands pointing up. Swing your arms from the elbow, first to the **right** and then to the **left**. Combine this movement with the kickstep—and you are dancing the Charleston.

How to Dance the Charleston Lesson Plan

Objective:

1. To learn how to dance the Charleston by following written instructions.

Time: 20 minutes

Materials:

1. "How to Dance the Charleston" explanation sheet.
2. Jazz recordings of *Yes Sir! That's My Baby* and *Charleston*.

Directions:

1. **Review** the background information regarding the Charleston.
2. **View** with students videos from the internet of the people dancing the Charleston in the 1920s. Ask students what they think about the dance. Does it look hard, or easy? Compare it to other dance styles that came before such as the waltz or the two-step, how do they differ? Compare the Charleston with how people dance today. Have students explain how the style of popular music during a particular decade changes how people dance.
3. **Distribute** the "How to Dance the Charleston" explanation sheet.
4. **Review** the written directions with students before trying the dance.
5. Students may **practice** individually, in pairs, or groups.
6. Once students have mastered the steps, have the entire class **try it** with music. If possible videotape the students and watch the performance together.

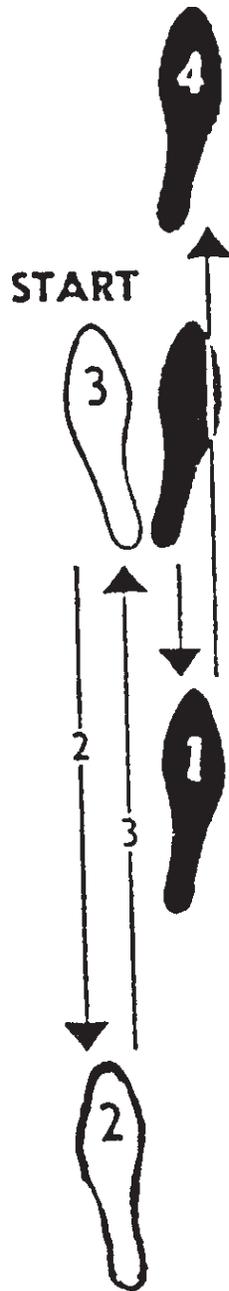
Background information: Dances such as the foxtrot, tango, and the black bottom made their way onto dance floors in clubs and ballrooms across the United States in the 1920s, but it would be the Charleston that became the defining dance of the decade. Much like the jazz music that gave it's name to the era, the Charleston is an American invention. Named for the city of Charleston in South Carolina, this dance was first popular within African American communities. The dance soon found international popularity after it was performed in the 1923 musical *Runnin' Wild*, alongside James P. Johnson's song *The Charleston*. Most people thought that the dance was too difficult for amateur dancers to master, but within a year every young "flapper" and "sheik" (fashionable women and men) was dancing the Charleston.

Additional activities:

1. **Music/Writing/Art:** Jazz music had a great impact on America and abroad in the 1920s. One of the most popular performers and composers of jazz music was Duke Ellington. Read aloud [Duke Ellington](#) by Andrea and Brian Pinkney. Have students try to define unfamiliar words and phrases used in the book that are associated with jazz. Play for students an example of a Duke Ellington song from the 1920s. Have students describe what the music sounds like, then create a drawing that captures the feeling of the song. Have students write a label for their drawing, explaining the title of their work and how the music influenced how the picture looked, using words and phrases from the story that they defined.

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