

Snapshot of the Period

The America that entered the twentieth century was a nation achieving world dominance while simultaneously losing some of its youthful innocence. Two world wars, a dizzying decade of prosperity, and a devastating worldwide depression marked this era. With these events came a new age in literature. The upheavals of the early twentieth century ushered in a period of literary boldness and lasting achievement. Many of the monumental figures of American literature, including F. Scott Fitzgerald, (shown with his wife Zelda, at right) William Faulkner, and Ernest Hemingway, rose to prominence during this period. Simultaneously, the movie industry grew from a fledgling experiment into a commercial powerhouse.

In 1919, the 18th Amendment established Prohibition in the United States. The Amendment was repealed in 1933. ►



Fitzgerald



Hemingway



Faulkner



Porter



Hughes



Hurston



As you read the selections in this unit, you will be asked to think about them in view of three key questions:

What is the relationship
between place and *literature*?

How does literature
shape or reflect *society*?

What makes American
literature *American*?

World Conflicts

Military Deaths

World War I

CENTRAL POWERS

Austria-Hungary
Germany

ALLIES

United States
British Empire
France
Russia

1 equals 250,000 military deaths

World War II

AXIS POWERS

Germany
Italy
Japan

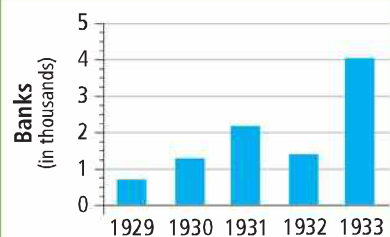
ALLIES

United States
USSR
British Empire

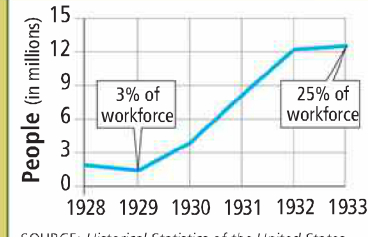
1 equals 500,000 military deaths

The Great Depression

Bank Failures



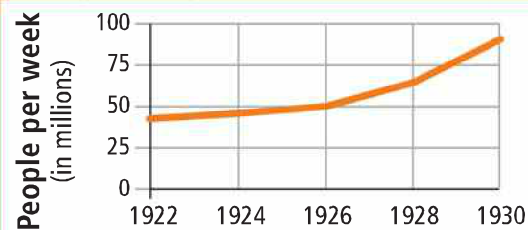
Unemployment, 1928-1933



SOURCE: Historical Statistics of the United States

The Movie Industry

Average Weekly Movie Attendance 1922-1930



SOURCE: Historical Statistics of the United States

Connect to the Period Review the data in the top four graphs against the information on movie attendance in the bottom chart. Based on this combination of data, what inferences can you draw about the role movies play in American society, especially during hard times? **[Connect]**

The Kid – 1921



Little Princess – 1939



Stagecoach – 1939



The Wizard of Oz – 1939



The Grapes of Wrath



Mildred Pierce – 1945