

The Roaring 20s: Flapper Culture

What do the youth of today have in common with the flappers of the 1920s?

1920s culture clashes

Traditional vs. modern ideals

In the 1920s, most Americans centered their lives on work, family, church, and the local community. The separation of races, ethnic groups, and gender roles was the accepted norm in these settings. Traditionalists advocated a strict moral code, including the prohibition of alcohol and restrictive immigration laws.

But industrialization and urban development gave birth to new attitudes and priorities. The world of immigrants and factories brought modern city life into focus. Traditional ideals often clashed with this evolving modern culture (that included

Flapper girls). Many Americans saw these modern, urban-centered trends as a threat. The most extreme response came from groups like the Ku Klux Klan, who opposed immigration.



Watch The Rise and Fall of the 1920s Ku Klux Klan to answer the following questions.

- 1 Why did the KKK focus on traditionalism as a way to protest changes underway in modern industrial society?

The KKK focused on traditionalism as a way to protest changes underway in the modern industrial society because Americans were shocked by consequential damages caused by advanced technology during the First World War.

- 2 What were some of the mainstream political actions against immigrants that the KKK sought to influence?

Some of the mainstream political actions against immigrants that KKK sought to influence include prohibition, political corruption, and the establishment of restrictive immigration laws.

3. Where was the influence of the KKK most active?

The influence of the KKK was most substantial in Indiana. One of the reasons why KKK was powerful in Indiana Klan was due to the capable leadership of D.C Stephenson that attracted many individuals to participate in various activities to combat modernization.

4. How did the KKK influence reporting on Klan activities in the 1920's press?

The KKK influenced reporting on Klan activities in the 1920's press by threatening publishers with boycotts and violence if they publish negative stories regarding the Klan. The KKK also controlled the media by giving the reporters bribes, thus distorting original information in the region.

Flapper culture

New attitudes

Despite the influence of traditional culture in the 1920s, post-World War I America was changing dramatically. A growing segment of the population, mostly younger and more urban, embraced new trends. In the prosperous consumer economy, affordable, mass-produced automobiles brought new mobility.

The expanding cities were fertile ground for this new cultural diversity. The young valued progressive ideas about women's roles in society and experimented with new styles of dress and behavior. Seeking to break out of what they considered old-fashioned moral codes, they found enjoyment in the present. Many young people danced to new music called "jazz" and embraced a culture inspired by modern fashion designs called "Flapper."

Criticism of the Flappers



Let's review some of the common accusations against the new "flapper" culture in this 1921 editorial, "Does Jazz Put the Sin in Syncopation." Be sure to read the Introduction and click the links provided to access the other three parts of the article.

- 1 Who wrote this article and where was it published?

Anne Shaw Faulkner is the one who wrote the article. The publication of the article was done in *Ladies Home Journal* in August 1921.

- 2 According to the author, what "serious situation" was facing America in the 1920s?

In the 1920s, America was significantly impacted by immoral conditions among young people. The above situation was as a result of jazz music that had evil influence.

- 3 What rule does Faulkner claim was adopted by the National Dancing Master's Association, and why?

The National Dancing Master's Association adopted the rule termed as "Don't permit vulgar cheap jazz music to be played." The main reason why the rule was established was due to the aspect of immoral variations that the music promoted in society.

A generational divide?

Read the first eight paragraphs of this Flapper's Appeal to Parents to answer the following questions using quotations from this primary source text. Audio is also available. (Please note that in this context the term "make love" refers to sweet talking.)

1. Who wrote this letter? Describe the audience the letter is addressing.

A flapper wrote the letter. The flapper was addressing the authority figures and her parents. The quotation below is crucial in identifying the audience of the message. "You parents, and grandparents, and friends, and teachers, and preachers—all of you."

2. What characteristics of flapper style does she identify in the first paragraph

In paragraph one, this individual identifies various characteristics such as fringed skirts, shoes, finale hopper, bright-colored sweaters, bobbed hair, low heeled, and the badge of flapper hood.

3. What does she identify as differences between her generation and her parents' generation?

She explains that her generation is greatly in-touch with the world than her parent's generation. Moreover, her generation has individuals who more developed in different aspects such as mental and physical dimensions as compared to the parents.

- 4 What does she suggest causes girls become flappers?

The main issue that causes girls to become flappers is nature. Nature transforms the attitudes of different girls, thus conforming to the new trend. For example, it is natural for every female individual to do what makes her happiest, a condition that enabled many girls to become flappers since they are satisfied with such trends.



Fashion in the 1920s

Read Fashions and Accessories in the 1920s (particularly the 1920s—a "Cloche and Flapper" Decade, and More) to answer the following questions.

- 1 Describe the two fashions most associated with the 1920s.

One of the fashions of the 1920s was knee length dresses. Fringes characterized these knee length dresses. The other type of fashion was the conservative form of dressing. Conservative fashion was a technique where the dresses were made to be in a floor-length, thus reducing exposure of skin.

- 2 Describe the mood represented by the people and music in the video "Flappers – the Roaring Twenties."

These individuals expressed a happy mood while having a good time. For example, they maintained smiles while dancing.

- 3 Describe the songs that young people listen to today. How would you describe the mood(s) of these songs?

The songs embraced by most of the young people today can be perceived as vulgar and inappropriate since some of them lack a sense of ethics. The mood of these songs is viewed as emotional and party oriented, among others.

Culture clashes today?

Flappers vs. today's youth

Watch this Roaring Twenties video and compare 1920s youth to young people today.



Using what you have learned, provide descriptions of 1920's flappers and Today's youth on the various cultural topics listed in the center of the table below.

Flappers of the 1920s	Topic to Consider	Today's Youth
Some of the activities of the flappers of the 1920s include smoking cigarettes and taking of office jobs after colleges or high schools before marriage.	Entertainment and Leisure Activities	Modern youth engages in sporting activities for leisure and entertainment. Other issues include watching movies and driving.
These youths wore hair in a bob and knee length dresses. Actresses played a significant role in influencing the type of fashion among the youths.	Clothing and Fashion	The youths of today derive their fashion from prominent people in the limelight. The youths also wear clothes like jeans, shirts, and rips.
Jazz music dominated society in the 1920s.	Music	Modern youth enjoys different genres of music, such as rap and blues.
The parents of these individuals were shocked by the dressing styles of the children and general behaviors.	Reaction from Parents	The parents of today's youths are not too much caring concerning the kind of dresses utilized by these people. There is a mixed reaction because some parents determine the clothes used by the children while others do not.



Write a response describing what the youth of today have in common with the flappers of the 1920s.

Entertainment is a phenomenon that creates a similarity between the youth of today and the flappers of the 1920s. The flappers embraced music as a form of entertainment during their time. For example, jazz music was the best among these flappers of the 1920s. Today's youth are also expressing their love for varied forms of music in society. Jazz music and some of the current songs experienced rejection by specific individuals due to ideological difference. Therefore, today's youth and the flappers of the 1920s enjoyed music during leisure and for entertainment purpose.

Moreover, smoking is a practice that is common in both durations. For example, the flappers of the 1920s loved smoking as a form of entertainment. The majority of the youth today also smokes various substances. The smoking habit of the youth today has evolved due to the advancement in technology, thus availing several strategies and equipment for smoking culture.

Fashion is another element that makes the youth of today comparable to the flappers of the 1920s. Fashion and design is a topic that was dominant in the 1920s. The flappers were capable of designing and wearing certain clothes that had unique features. The youth of today are also displaying several fashion and designs that are complicated. The fashion and clothes in these periods are deemed to be crucial for many reasons. For example, the flappers gained happiness from these clothes and fashions. The same case applies in today's world since the youth are satisfied with the kind of dresses and fashion that prevails thus makes a lot of purchases.