

USA 1919 - 1929

How and why did the USA achieve prosperity in the 1920's?

Isolationism: American reactions to the end of WWI

- Woodrow Wilson important in T of V
 - 14 Points (1918) used to create the peace.
 - Responsible for setting up L of N
- American Attitudes
 - Americans didn't like the League of Nations
 - Didn't want to get involved in disputes far away.
 - Thought USA would have to bear the cost of keeping the peace.
- Reactions to the League
 - President was a Democrat but the rival party, the Republicans, controlled Congress.
 - Opposed to L of N and refused to join.
 - Wilson lost the presidential election of 1920 to the Republican Warren Harding.
 - He talked of a need to return to 'normalcy' – back to normal. "America First"



Isolationism

The Traditional Explanation

The American people had not wanted to go into World War One & did not join in until 1917 - and when the war ended they rejected the Treaty of Versailles and the League of Nations. This is called 'isolationism' - the desire to keep out of foreign affairs.

Why did the USA not want to join the League of Nations? **IMAGE**

Isolationalism:

- America = 'New World' and did not want anything to do with the 'Old World', which they saw as being corrupt, old-fashioned and full of dangerous ideas like Communism. Most Americans liked the Monroe Doctrine of 1823, that America should stay out of Europe's affairs, and Europe should stay out of America's.

Reason 2

Money:

- American businessmen were worried about the COST of the League - paying taxes to pay for its organisation, and losing trade if it decided to impose sanctions & cost of rebuilding Europe

Reason 3

American soldiers:

- 100,000 soldiers had died in the First World War, and many Americans couldn't see why American soldiers should die keeping peace elsewhere in the world.

Reason 4

German immigrants:

- Many Americans were immigrants from Europe and they still had ties there. So German immigrants HATED the Treaty of Versailles just as much as the Germans in Germany. (Also, many Irish immigrants HATED Britain so much they didn't want to have anything to do with a League of Nations with the British in it).

Reason 5

Empires:

- The American colonies had once been part of an empire, but the American revolution was about freedom from empire. The Treaty of Versailles hadn't abolished the British Empires (indeed, it had added Mandates to them), and many Americans did not want to be part of a Treaty or a League with upheld the British Empire.

Consequences of isolationism:

- Tariffs against Foreign Goods
 - Foreign goods were not allowed to compete with home-produced goods.
 - **1922 Fordney-McCumber Tariff** put a tax on foreign goods and made them more expensive than the same American products.
 - This was intended to 'protect' American industry and worked well in the 1920s. It helped to create 'boom' conditions.
 - The tariff was not so effective in the long term as it encouraged foreign governments to retaliate and put tariffs on American goods.

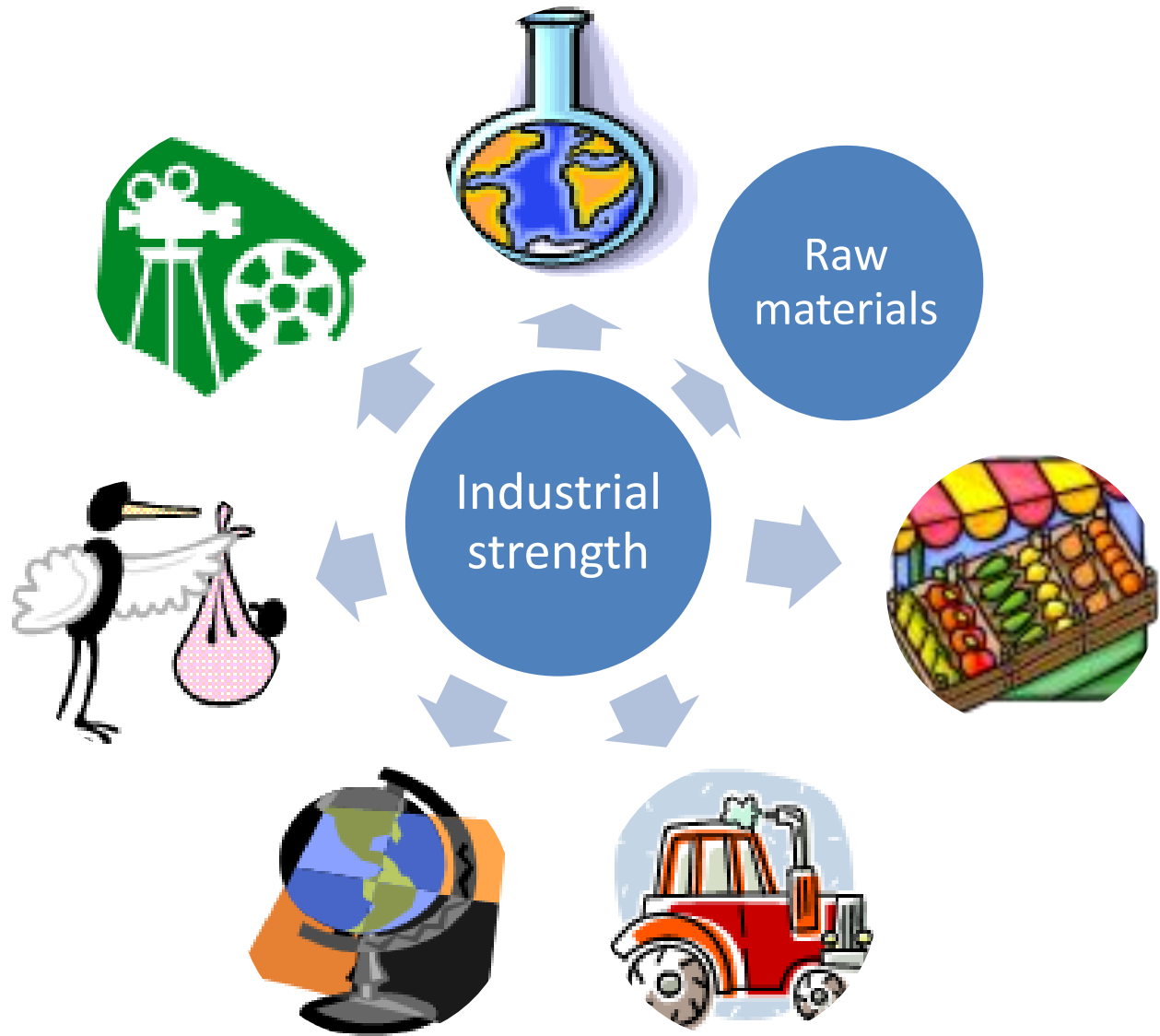
Relations with foreign countries

- During the 1920's they were not good
- Most victorious European countries resented the fact that the USA had not accepted the Treaty of Versailles or joined the League.

The economic boom 1920s

The USA up to 1920

- Industry and farming had grown since 1860s.
- Huge resources (coal, iron, timber, oil)
- Growing population, many of the immigrants willing to work hard.
- Railways, mining and manufacturing were all strong.
- In the early years of WWI, American businesses profited from the war in Europe
- American industries supplied arms & equipment
- American firms were able to take over much of the export business of the European powers while they were caught up in the fighting.
- WWI made the USA wealthy and confident
- Americans felt that they were doing well
- It also made them isolationist



Other reasons for prosperity

- **Mass production**
- Used by Ford motor car company
- **Use of conveyor belt (or assembly line)**– brings product to workers so saving time
- **Specialisation of labour** – workers do one job very well & very fast
- **Buy bulk** – reduces cost of raw materials, can pass savings on to customers
- **Consumer goods-** new products, untapped market, labour saving devices popular
- **Hire Purchase** – customers only need 10% of total price & could borrow rest & pay back loan weekly. Increased sales of goods

State of mind

- **Spend spend spend**
- **And speculation**

advertising

- New multi million dollar industry
- Department stores
- Mail order catalogues

Entertainment industry

- Hollywood
- First 'talkies'
- Selling American Dream

- 100's of radio stations
- Jazz music
- Advertising through entertainment

- Charleston, tango & the Black Bottom dances
- New crazy stunts
- All reflect the state of mind of the nation

Republican policies

- Laissez Faire
- Tarrifs
- 'return to normalcy'
- restrict immigration

1917: Immigration Law

all immigrants had to read English, banned all immigration from Asia, and charged an immigration fee of \$8.

1921: Emergency Quota Act

The number of immigrants from 'the eastern hemisphere' could not be more than 3% of the number already in America in 1910. It set the maximum number of immigrants in any year at 357,000.

1924: Reed-Johnson Act

Maximum number of immigrants in any year at 154,000. Quota from eastern hemisphere reduced to 2% of those already in America in 1890; the South and the East of Europe were thus only allowed to send 20,000 immigrants per year, and non-Europeans only 4,000.

Exam style questions:

- A what does source A suggest about America's attitude to immigration in the 1920's?

Source A

As soon as they step off the decks of their ships our problem has begun - bolshevism, red anarchy, black-handers and kidnapers, challenging the authority and integrity of our flag...

Thousands come here who never take the oath to support our constitution and to become citizens of the United States. They pay allegiance to some other country while they live upon the substance of our own. They fill places that belong to the loyal wage-earning citizens of America... They are of no service whatever to our people. They constitute a menace and a danger to us every day..

Speech by Senator Heflin of Alabama, 1921

Mark scheme

- **Target: Comprehension and inference from a source (AO 3)**
- pupils either give no evidence or fail to address the question. **0**
- **Level 1 Answer that takes information from the source**
- e.g. describe stepping off the decks into the USA as a problem; bolshevism and anarchy challenge the flag
- **1-2**
- **Level 2 Answer shows understanding and is able to make inference(s) from the source**
- e.g. Some powerful Americans were racist and wanted to control which European races came to the USA; during and immediately after the First World War. Intolerance was found even in the highest level of society; immigrants seen as a threat to society and to individuals; anti communist views; very loyal to US flag and patriotism
- **3-4**

Explain how mass production helped to cause the boom

Target: Causation and analysis of key features (AO1 and 2)

Level 1: Simple descriptive comment and/or identifies one reason

e.g. mass production speeded up the process of making goods therefore made them cheaper.

e.g. New consumer goods were easy to sell as noone owned any

The answer demonstrates simple understanding of the rules of spelling, punctuation and grammar. It is generally coherent but basic in development.

1-2

Level 2: EITHER

Identifies several reasons but doesn't explain how they helped cause the boom

e.g. specialisation of labour,; buying bulk raw materials; HP credit; production lines; new consumer goods; advertising

OR

Explains one reason

e.g. specialisation of labour meant that a worker didn't waste time moving around the factory to do different jobs. Because they repeated the same job all the time they became very fast at it and could make more products an hour, hence the cost of consumer products fell. **3-4**

Level 3 Explains more than one reason

e.g. two or more from the list above..

The answer demonstrates developed understanding of the rules of spelling, punctuation and grammar. It is well organised with an appropriate form and style of writing. Some specialist vocabulary is used

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