Sounds and Screens

How new art and technology changed life in the 1920s

USH.4.1 "Identify new cultural and technological movements of the 1920s, and explain their impacts on Americans."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline three cultural or technological developments, then give each development and its matching impact the same number (1, 2, or 3); circle one detail showing unequal access.

A New Kind of Audience

(1) In 1927, a family gathered around a radio after dinner. From a distant studio came a live band, followed by news and an advertisement for soap. During the 1920s, broadcasting grew rapidly, bringing voices from far away into homes. People in different states could hear the same performance or sports report on the same night. Radio helped create a shared national culture and gave businesses a new way to reach customers. Yet a radio cost money, and many rural homes lacked electricity, so this new connection was not equally available to every American.

(2) The music coming through a radio might have been jazz, a style developed by Black musicians that featured syncopated rhythms and improvisation. As many Black Americans moved from the South to northern cities, Harlem in New York became a major center of Black artistic life. During the Harlem Renaissance, writers, painters, and musicians presented new images of Black experiences. Jazz clubs and recordings brought the music to wider audiences and influenced popular music across the country. But Black performers often faced discrimination, even as white-owned businesses made money from music that Black artists had helped create.

(3) A different kind of crowd lined up outside movie theaters. Silent films had already made actors famous, and sound films began attracting audiences near the end of the decade. A ticket let people watch stories from beyond their own neighborhoods, while screen fashions and stars shaped what some viewers wanted to wear or buy. Studios could show the same film in cities across the country, another way popular culture spread widely. Still, not everyone saw the same welcome at the movies: theaters in many places were segregated, and Hollywood often gave people of color limited or stereotyped roles.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did radio broadcasting connect Americans, and what kept some people from sharing in that change?

2. How did jazz and the Harlem Renaissance influence American culture? Include one barrier Black artists faced.

3. How did movies affect Americans beyond the theater? Explain one way the movie industry did not treat everyone equally.

4. How did radio and movies both spread culture across the country? What was one difference in how people experienced them?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 1920s diary entry from a teenager who encounters one cultural movement and one technology from the passage. Invent a specific moment, explain how each changes the teen's choices or views, and show one limit on who can take part.

ANSWER KEY

Sounds and Screens

HIGH SCHOOL · USH.4.1

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline three cultural or technological developments, then give each development and its matching impact the same number (1, 2, or 3); circle one detail showing unequal access. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did radio broadcasting connect Americans, and what kept some people from sharing in that change?	**People in different states could hear the same programs, creating a shared national culture. Radio sets cost money, and many rural homes lacked electricity.**
2	How did jazz and the Harlem Renaissance influence American culture? Include one barrier Black artists faced.	**Black artists presented new images of Black experiences, and jazz reached wider audiences and influenced popular music. Black performers still faced discrimination.**
3	How did movies affect Americans beyond the theater? Explain one way the movie industry did not treat everyone equally.	**Screen stars and fashions influenced what some viewers wanted to wear or buy. Theaters in many places were segregated, and Hollywood often gave people of color limited or stereotyped roles.**
4	How did radio and movies both spread culture across the country? What was one difference in how people experienced them?	**Both brought the same entertainment to people in different places. People could hear radio programs at home, but they went to theaters to see movies.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Tonight I went to Mrs. Lee's house because our farm has no electricity. Her radio carried a jazz band from a distant city. Hearing it made me want to start a music group at school, so I tried tapping out the rhythm to remember it. At the library, I also read poems by writers of the Harlem Renaissance. Their words made me decide to write about life in my own town. I wish more families here could hear these broadcasts at home.

Accept other passage-supported effects and barriers. For the diary entry, look for an invented moment, a clear effect of both a cultural movement and a technology, and a plausible limit on participation.