

## The Roaring Twenties in Canada

In the eyes of the British and the Americans, Canada was a “backwater” for culture. In the 1920s, however, Canadians contributed to popular culture both at home and abroad.

### Rise of Popular Culture

Industrialization brought new products, many of which were labour-saving home appliances, and many of which were new “stuff.” And these products became cheaper and more accessible each year. For example, in 1914, Canadians owned 46 000 cars; in 1919, 196 000 cars; and by 1929, there were over 1 million cars in Canada.

### Leisure Time

Labour-saving inventions, regulated working hours, and increased efficiencies, allowed for more leisure time. Canadians wanted to move on from the horrors of war and turned from talking politics and religion to movies, sports, and the beach. Established social institutions (churches, unions) were threatened by these new activities.

### Canadian contributions

Visual Artists still known today began working in the 1920s: The Group of Seven, Emily Carr, and David Milne, among them. The humour author Stephen Leacock also began his career in the 1920s.

### Consumerism

Leisure and consumption go hand in hand. The techniques developed from war propaganda posters were used on products, and for promotion of American movies, magazines, and radio. Advertising promised glamour, liberation, freedom, escape. These were very attractive promises to a war-tired nation.

### Urban-Rural Divide

Most of the changes are happening in cities. “Pop” culture is very much an urban phenomena. Before WWI, 45% of Canadians lived in cities, and by 1920, it had increased to 50%. Farmers were feeling unappreciated, as prices dropped, suburbs encroached upon their land and many still did not have electricity or water. 1924 was the high point of greatest farming production in Canada.

Tasks (on the class website – leeseeschool.weebly.com):

- View the 1920s powerpoint
- Listen to the radio broadcast
- Make a THEN & NOW poster using the provided template

## THEN & NOW

A lot of ideas about body image, American cultural invasions, fashions and trends, vices, and gender norms emerged in the 1920s.

- A) Create a poster, using a combination of visuals and text, to compare and contrast what was happening THEN with what is happening NOW. Have things changed? Have they stayed the same?  
Visuals can be created by you, or cut and paste from printed images. Text should be written by you, or put in quotes and attributed to someone if from online. Ex: "Remember to give credit to the author!" – Lee Sinnott
- B) On the back of the poster, write a brief judgment: Considering the topic you chose, NOW vs. THEN: are things more the SAME, or more DIFFERENT?

***What to compare?*** That's up to you! Focus on the information that really resonated (hit home, struck a chord) with you.

### Then & Now example topics

Then & Now.....

- how are men or women "supposed" to act?
- Cigarette smoking
- Alcohol use
- American media in Canada
- Fashionable clothes
- Body image
- Consumer habits: what do people buy?
- How products are advertised

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Evaluation:

### **Application**

(Making connections between the 1920s and today)

<b>Insufficient</b>	<b>Level 1</b>	<b>Level 2</b>	<b>Level 3</b>	<b>Level 4</b>
Task is incomplete	Connections are limited and/or inaccurate	Some Connections are made, mostly accurate	Connections are present and accurate	Connections are present and accurate, as well as insightful