The Twenties (1920s): An Overview
Analyze the origins and outcomes of the intense cultural conflicts of the 1920s. In your response, focus on TWO of the following: Immigration, Prohibition, Religion
Immigration

**Origins**
- Southern and eastern European immigration
- Mexico
- Ethnic communities, tenements
- Labor unions feared immigrants, scabs
- Nativism
- Immigration restrictions
- World War I, “100% Americanism”
- Red Scare, radicalism
- Anti-Asian attitudes
- Ku Klux Klan

**Outcomes**
- Ku Klux Klan
- Cultural pluralism (vs. Nativism)
- Sacco and Vanzetti
- Emergency Quota Acts of 1921 and 1924
- Hispanic immigration
- Border Patrol established
Prohibition

Origins

- Temperance Movement, WCTU
- Anti-Saloon League
- Eighteenth Amendment
- Volstead Act
- Prohibition as a “noble experiment”
- Wets vs. Drys

Outcomes

- Deaths from alcoholism declined
- Drinking still pervasive, lawbreaking
- Speakeasies, bootlegging, organized crime
- 21st Amendment in 1933
Religion

Origins
- Modernism vs. Fundamentalism
- Darwin and evolution
- Anti-Catholicism and anti-Semitism

Outcomes
- Ku Klux Klan
- Scopes Trial (Darrow and Bryan)
- Fundamentalism (argue either way)
- Evangelical revivalism
How did TWO of the following help shape American national culture in the 1920s: advertising, entertainment, mass production
Advertising

**Glorification of consumption**
- Spending becomes a cultural ideal (rather than thrift), installment buying
- Consumption becomes a cultural ideal (rather than production)
- Possession of goods replaces cultural ideals of character and social standing

**Impact on women**
- Alters the image of beauty, sells the idea that beauty can be purchased
- Housewives are now less defined as workers and more defined as consumers
- Makes sexuality, smoking, and drinking more acceptable for women

**Changes in the technologies and structures of advertising**
- Focus is on creating dissatisfactions with one’s body, image, and status
- Preys on insecurities and creates new expectations
- Cult of celebrity enhanced by use of celebrity endorsements

**Search for markets**
- Brand names, movement to national markets for brand goods, efforts to create brand loyalties
- Advertising companies multiply
- Bruce Barton’s *The Man Nobody Knows* describes Jesus as a master salesman
Entertainment

- **Impacts of movies, radio, phonograph, jazz music**

- Media influences national trends, new ways to spend leisure time, changes the image of women, emphasis on culture of consumption, promotes the cult of celebrity

- **Postwar cynicism of the Lost Generation and other writers**

- F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, Gertrude Stein, Sinclair Lewis, H.L. Mencken
Mass Production

- More affordable consumer products
- Mass distribution accelerates the push for single markets
- Middle class salaries increase, prices fall
- Auto production stimulates other industries
- Impact on workers (further deskill, declining union membership, declining need for cheap immigrant labor)
- Large-scale, industrialized agriculture influences availability of goods
- Labor-saving devices = more time for leisure
- Businessmen are now celebrities, big business is a cultural icon (unlike during the Gilded Age)
- Taylorism
Describe and account for the rise of nativism in American society from 1900-1930.
Nativism: 1900-1930

- “New Immigrants” from southern and eastern Europe (Catholics, Jews, Eastern Orthodox)
- Job competition: immigrants willing to work for lower wages, used as “scab” labor
- Poor working conditions of immigrants
- Fear of communism, socialism, and anarchy in labor unions
- Social Darwinism
- Chinese Exclusion Act
- Gentlemen’s Agreement of 1907
- Anti-German sentiment during and after WWI
- Red Scare, Palmer Raids, Sacco and Vanzetti
- Ethnocentrism
- Tie between support for Prohibition and anti-foreign sentiment
Analyze the primary causes of the population shift from a rural to an urban environment in the United States between 1875 and 1925.
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- Rapid expansion of steam railroad network
- Appearance and widespread use of electric trolleys
- Attractions of urban culture; the “pull of the city,” including Horatio Alger stories
- Drought: Great Plains, 1890s-1910s
- Development and expansion of automobiles
- Increased agricultural mechanization and improved agricultural productivity
- Job opportunities in North industrial centers (WWI)