

1920's Writing Review:
Summing Up All We've Learned

You will summarize the key ideas, events, people, and themes from the 1920's through a FIRST PERSON writing assignment. Pretend you are alive in the 1920's, the particular year doesn't matter; now, write a diary / journal entry that includes the things listed below. DO NOT change the font, font size, or margins. You do not need a header. The entire writing should be two full pages long.

Topics to include in your writing [do not make things up, use the resources below to help you recall the information], can be in any order that you'd like:

- I. The past - what has happened before the 1920's that has shaped your life? How has that impacted the world? How has that impacted the USA?
- II. Politics / Government - who is / are the presidents? What do they represent? How does the public feel about them?
- III. The tensions - What is making Americans tense? What problems are there? Any groups of people that America is scared of? Any newsworthy events?
- IV. The culture - What music are you listening to? Are you an old person or young person? What about the fashion? Any cool new inventions? Something that you'd like to buy? What are people doing for fun? What are people watching or listening to?

Resources:

Be sure to use: TCI, PowerPoints, information from your projects.

DUE: FRIDAY 20th @11:59PM

First Check: WEDNESDAY 18: During class. I will be checking to see your progress.

Dear Diary, I think that the time when I am forced to resort to expressing my thoughts, feelings, and opinions on a piece of paper as an alternative to having conversations with real friends has come, unfortunately. The reason for that must be my unshared by others approach toward the world in which I live today. From books, or their ancestors, everyone knows about progress and how the world simply keeps changing as years go by, but I find myself surrounded by instability and constant changes that seem too fast to accommodate to. This makes me feel extremely insecure about my future, and most importantly, my children's future. You might not understand everything yet, which is why I will start by telling you some details about the previous years of my life.

Fifteen years ago, when my daughter Jane was seven and my son Robert was only four years old, a war across the Atlantic was announced. In 1914, President Wilson, who left office eight years ago, declared our country's neutrality in the war. Personally, I agreed that not getting involved in a foreign conflict was the best decision, although many of our friends who had relatives in Italy, France, Germany, Britain, had very strong feelings about the war and were not pleased by the neutral state of The United States. Three years later, despite being just one year younger than the age limit of the draft, my husband James was forced to enlist and was then sent to fight for the nation in France. I was left at home with my two young kids, and had to sew uniforms for the army instead of dresses at the factory where I had been working. Though, I must admit that due to the increased wages, not only was I able to support and raise my family during that year, but also save some money and buy multiple bonds. When James returned, he could not continue working at his previous working place, due to his employer hiring African-American men who "could work more for less". When the owner of my factory reduced our wages too, many of my co-workers joined the AFL and went on strike. Luckily, I was one of the few who refused the proposal and kept on working. The consequences of their manifestation

were regrettable, as they were all fired and foreign women, mostly Irish and Italian, took their place. Losing a job at that time was exceptionally dangerous, as finding a new decent workplace seemed impossible. The streets were flooded by unemployed people and men disappointed by the lack of offers in each Bureau for Returning Soldiers of our Employment Service.

Unemployment, strikes, and wage reductions across the entire country were not the only factors that led to my alertness. More than two dozen mysterious bombings made me wonder: “What are my neighbors doing?”, “Am I safe here?”, One day, James told us to throw all of our red clothes away, “Palmer sent the police, they are looking for Communists,” he said. I did not understand up until the next morning, when a young man across the street was deported as officials found a red pamphlet, which in fact, belonged to his roommate. We were shocked by the actions of both the subversives and the officials; you could feel the people’s fear of being accused.

One year later, during the first electoral campaign after the end of the Great War, I could finally agree with Harding’s statements. His promises, specifically him declaring his goal to bring America “back to normalcy”, won him my vote. I could even say that we have had Wilson for eight years, and I have not understood him, then I understood Harding momentarily. Later, countless scandals were constantly discussed by the public and articles published in newspapers — Harding, the president whose vice did not let him finish his term. Although, I have to admit that during Harding’s and Coolidge’s presidencies, we could afford more goods as prices plunged, and unemployment was becoming less and less common too. Herbert Hoover has just been elected and James says that Hoover helped soldiers and poor civilians in Europe during the war by sending food, but I don’t have a definitive opinion of him yet.

A couple of years ago, James started working at the Ford car factory in the nearby town of Highland Park. The generosity of his employer was unbelievable, as James was paid twice

the regular amount per eight-hour day – one hour shorter than the common day at that time. We were even able to acquire a Model T three years ago for less than \$300. Having a car certainly has numerous advantages, as it allows us to travel and visit our relatives more often, but it has also had a significant impact on my children by giving them too much freedom. I recall the times when everyone rationed food and saved money to buy bonds, but now, everyone spends all their money even before they have them. I am trying my best to teach Jane and Robert that having all of the new clothes and accessories is not worth being in debt, but with little success so far. I am sure that is because of all the new advertisements that capture their attention wherever they go. They do not recognize hyperbolized claims having no evidence or clear explanation, instead they choose to follow the naive mass of consumers.

My children are vastly different from what I used to be as a child. They are offered much more fun activities that make the familial relationship both stronger and weaker at the same time. One of these activities is going to movies. Robert loves to go to the movie-theatre with his dad to watch films such as the “Black Pirate” starring Douglas Fairbanks. Personally, I enjoy watching Charlie Chaplin; he is everyone’s favorite. Robert and James also love spectating baseball games, and when a game is too far to attend, they will always listen to the radio broadcast, which I also consider to be one of the best inventions. Robert even has posters of Babe Ruth above his bed from The Baseball Magazine.

Jane however, is a whole different story and I am absolutely infuriated by her transformation under the influence of her environment. Having the hair cut so short, wearing lipstick, rouge, eyeshadows, and skirts that do not at least cover the knees would all have been considered unacceptable back in my days and could even get her into trouble. Besides, I wish the Charleston dance and that wicked Jazz music had never been invented. The footwork,

flailing arms and swinging hips are completely immoral and must be prohibited as soon as possible. I wish my children were not so much different nowadays.

Since the end of the Great War, changes have happened to our lives and society more than anyone could imagine. I truly hope that the end of these unstable times is around the corner, but the intuition is telling me that harsh days are coming.

March, 1929