

**SSUSH16 – Investigate how political, economic, and cultural developments after WWI led to a shared national identity.**

e. Describe the emergence of modern forms of cultural expression including the origins of jazz and the Harlem Renaissance.

The 1920s marked a distinct break from the Victorian culture of the previous century. In the visual arts, the **Modernist Movement** began during the period. European modern artists, whose work was first exhibited in 1913, influenced American artists. These works were impressionistic, abstract, geometric, and represented a break from the schools of romanticism and realism. The era also marked the beginning of the art deco movement. In this new form, artists began to create artistically styled furnishings using modern materials such as aluminum, plastics, and glass. In architecture, the trend of building skyscrapers accelerated.

Literature in the modern era was noted for its themes of alienation and disillusionment. Writers rebelled against traditional constraints and incorporated themes deemed immoral by the previous generation. Most notable were the writers that came out of the Harlem Renaissance.

The **Harlem Renaissance** marked the first significant artistic movement coming out of Black culture. Centered in the Harlem borough of New York City, the movement produced notable works of literature, music, dance, and visual art. Writers included W.E.B. DuBois and Langston Hughes. Hughes' poetry used the rhythms of Black music, particularly blues and jazz. This allowed Hughes to experiment with a very rhythmic free verse. Harlem's Cotton Club was an important location, where White audiences were exposed to ideas of the Harlem Renaissance - including Jazz. Performing arts expanded with the advent of radio and movies. As income rose during the period, families had more money available to spend on entertainment. Radio stations needed to fill airtime by broadcasting the latest music to listeners. Jazz was a genre that benefitted from this demand for music.

Although **Jazz** was not born out of the Harlem Renaissance, it was the first true American music. The musical form was so influential that the era of the 1920s is often referred to as the Jazz Age. Born in the Deep South, Jazz was thought to have originated from the musical traditions brought by slaves from West Africa combined with western musical instruments and techniques. Jazz, as a musical style, is easy to recognize but hard to define. Jazz has elements of different genres of music but is most noted for its improvisations. By the 1920s, there were several different types of Jazz, including Dixieland that originated in New Orleans. Famous Jazz musicians included Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington. Jazz also influenced composers such as Cole Porter and the Gershwin Brothers who composed *Rhapsody in Blue* and the Jazz opera *Porgy and Bess*.

Define

**Harlem Renaissance**

1. **Who were the major writers of the Harlem Renaissance?**
2. **Who were the major jazz musicians of the Harlem Renaissance?**
3. **What was impact of the emergence of jazz and Harlem Renaissance?**