

CAUSE AND CONSEQUENCE

How and why did the USA achieve prosperity in the 1920s?

This revision activity works best if you do it with a friend, and talk about it as you do it.

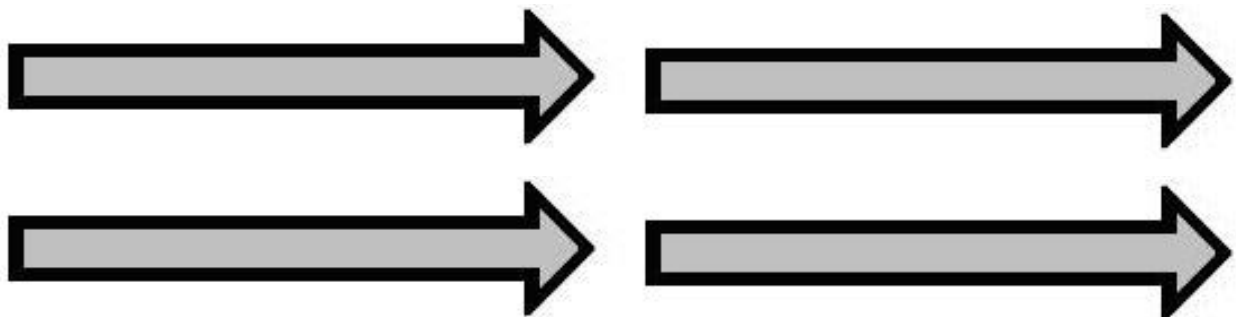
The bedrock of any answer to the question *HOW* something happened is understanding cause and consequence. This process can be represented like this:



with the causal link(s) shown by an arrow; the box on the left is the cause (an event that happened), and the boxes on the right are consequences (the event(s)/reaction(s) it provoked).

Below are boxes giving facts about America in the 1920s. Cut the boxes up into cards and also cut out the arrows. Use your ingenuity and the arrows to make up as many 'action–reaction' flow diagrams as you can – you should be able to create hundreds of them.

Each time you make up a flow diagram, describe your reasoning, taking special care to explain *HOW* the links worked to create the result they did.



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| Economies of scale | Isolationism | New industries | 'Talkies' were invented in 1927 |
| 'Time and motion' studies | 100 million Americans went to the movies every week | Five million Model Ts sold in 1929 | A 'bull market' on the stock exchange |
| Adverts (including radio broadcasts after 1921) | America stayed out of WWI until 1917 | Average wages increased by 27% in the 1920s | Bakelite was invented |
| Demand increased, especially for 'gadgets' | During WWI, the British bought armaments from US firms | Ford made a new Model T every ten seconds | Hire purchase, easy payments and mail order |
| Increased consumer spending | Laissez-faire government policy ('rugged individualism') | Low taxes | Mass production on assembly lines |
| President Hoover predicted a 'triumph over poverty' | Prosperity – fridges, washing machines, vacuums, telephones | Rayon was invented | Rich people moved out of town to live in 'the suburbs' |
| Share prices rose 500%, 1921–1929 | Social life boomed – e.g. jazz, speakeasies, flappers etc | Sport boomed (Babe Ruth earned \$80,000 a year) | The courts allowed US firms to break strikes by force |
| The film industry boomed | Fordney–McCumber (1922) raised customs duties to up to 400% | The number of automobiles rose 8 million to 23 million | The number of millionaires rose from 7000 to 35,000 |
| The number of radios rose 60,000 to 10 million | The price of a Model T fell from \$850 to \$295 1911-20 | The US economy grew by 40% in the 1920s | There was a boom in house-building |
| There was a boom in road-building | There was a boom in the automobile industry | There was a boom in the steel, glass and rubber industries | There was growth in the oil industry |
| Trade unions were weak | Trusts and cartels | US firms had grown greatly during the First World War | Workers were made to sign 'yellow dog' contracts |