Essay Assignment: Using information from the documents provided, the material covered in class, and your knowledge of U.S. history, write a well-organized essay which answers the following question:

*In what ways did the film industry in the 1920s and early 1930s reflect the changing culture of the time?*

**GENERAL REQUIREMENTS:**

- The essay needs to follow the guidelines for an *analytical, five-paragraph* essay. It should have five paragraphs, an argumentative thesis statement, specific historical examples, and quotations.

- Length: 3-4 pages, double-spaced, typed, 1-inch margins, font size 12. Please use TIMES NEW ROMAN or something comparable. Please number your pages.

- You should have at least one DIRECT quotation in each body paragraph. You will be given sources from which to draw your evidence. If you need sources beyond those given, you may use the L-S databases only (i.e., Pop Culture Universe, US History in Context, etc.).

- All sources should be cited in either a footnote or endnote. If you’re not familiar with using footnotes, ask and I will show you how to do it.

- I am available for extra-help by appointment before school or during the day (blocks 2, 4, and 7). I am more than willing to discuss your ideas with you, talk through your outline, discuss a draft, etc., just let me know how I can help. You know where to find me.

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**In-class work days:**
Thursday, Nov. 6th and Friday, Nov. 7th

**Thesis statements and outlines check:**
By the end of class Thursday, Nov. 6th

**Final essays due:**
Monday, Nov. 10th (Block 6) or Tuesday, Nov. 11th (Block 5)

**PLEASE NOTE:** The essay will not be counted in your Quarter 1 grades - it will be your first big grade for Quarter 2.
Step 1: Brainstorm

A. What was happening in the 1920s and early 1930s? What were some of the cultural, political, social and economic trends or themes of the time?

B. What are some of the trends you saw or read about in the movie industry at this time? Consider more than the movies themselves, also think about the entire Hollywood film industry.

Step 2: Look over the brainstorm list. See if you can connect parts A and B. Where are there overlapping themes that you could use as a body paragraph? Make sure you choose three themes/trends which you know enough about and feel comfortable explaining in depth.

Step 3: Read the documents attached to the essay question. As you read, consider how you might use some (not all) of the documents to support the chosen themes.

Step 4: Gather evidence from your notes (homework readings, class notes, films, etc.) to support those themes. Be sure to include SPECIFIC, DETAILED evidence. Be sure to include the name of the handout/source/document # in your notes so that you can cite it later. Each paragraph should have a minimum of 3 detailed examples to illustrate the theme.

Step 5: Write a thesis statement that addresses the question.

Step 6: Start outlining your paragraphs.

- Outlines should include topic sentences (be sure they are analytic, meaning that they make a clear argument that supports the thesis.)
- List the evidence you plan to use. Be detailed, include references to which documents or sources you plan to use for each piece of evidence. Remember, you need to use a minimum of 1 quote per body paragraph.
- For those who sometimes struggle with analysis, I would encourage you to write a sentence analyzing each of your examples underneath the evidence. This will give you a chance to practice and me a chance to look it over to make sure that what you think is analysis, actually is.
| What was happening in the 1920s & early 1930?  
(Cultural, political, social & economic trends or themes of the time) | What were some of the trends in the movie industry in the 1920s & early 1930?  
(Consider more than the movies themselves, also think about the entire Hollywood film industry.) |
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Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Historical Statistics of the United States. Col. (1) Series D844; Col. (2) Series D840; Col. (3) Series D830; Col. (4) Series D811; Col. (5) Series K181. All dollar figures are deflated by the Consumer Price Index from series EI 35 set to 1929=100.

Document 2:

1920s innovations:
- 1918: U.S. Postal Service begins air mail service.
- 1919: Commercial airlines begin service.
- 1920: Pre-assembled home radio receivers are sold. Commercial radio stations begin broadcasting. Tommy gun patented by John T. Thompson.
- 1922: The first 3-D movie is released.
- 1923: Garrett A. Morgan invents the traffic signal.
- 1924: The dynamic loudspeaker invented by Rice and Kellogg.
- 1925: The mechanical television a precursor to the modern television, invented by John Logie Baird.
- 1926-1927: Record-setting transatlantic, polar, and global airplane flights are completed.
- 1927: Sound films ("talking pictures") are introduced. Ford River Rouge [Detroit] automobile factory complex is completed. Model A Ford automobile is introduced. Technicolor invented. Philo Taylor Farnsworth invents a complete electronic TV system.

Document 3:

Document 4:
It seems to be an accepted axiom nowadays that our young people are going to the devil. Press, pulpit, and publicist are agreed that youth is wild and getting wilder. The college boy and his flapper friend, it is charged, drink, pet, and are disrespectful to their elders, while the neighborhood gangster, aided by his youthful sweetie and stimulated by the false courage of heroin or cocaine, robs and murders with casual calmness long before he is out of his teens. Most of this lamentation, of course, is based on theory and not on fact. Those who indulge in it have read in the papers of a few sensational cases like the Leopold-Loeb affair, or have witnessed some of the post-Prohibition drinking parties in which youth, imitating the practice of its elders, indulges. The reasoning is almost always from the particular to the general, a type of argument which is as dangerous in this case as usual.

Recognizing that this is true, the Children’s Bureau of the United States Bureau of Labor recently undertook to throw a little light, of a really scientific character, on this question. If youth is as wild as is represented, and the wildness extends through all classes, the results certainly ought to be reflected in the records of the juvenile courts and the institutions in which delinquents are detained. Accordingly, a careful study was made of the statistics dealing with the subject. The figures investigated included delinquency rates in fourteen of the leading cities of the United States . . .

In nearly all these fourteen cities, the delinquency rates per 1,000 children of “delinquency age” were decidedly lower in 1924 or 1925 than in 1915 . . .

These statistics, the reliability of which is beyond question, do not of course show that all the ululations of the alarmed editorial writers and preachers are unjustified. Youth may really be wild, in a fashion which does not get itself reflected in the delinquency and prison statistics. In so far, however, as the complaint has been made of youthful criminals as a new phenomenon, it is clearly without foundation. And certainly whatever wildness of youth exists, if it be not serious enough to draw the attention of the law, cannot be worth as much excitement, as many millions of words of frenzied exhortation, as it has been receiving.
Document 6:

Citation: F. Scott Fitzgerald, quoted in Margaret Reid, “Has the Flapper Changed?” *Motion Picture Magazine*, July 1927

Background: Fitzgerald was an American author who is widely regarded as one of the greatest American writers of the 20th century. A member of the so-called “Lost Generation” of the 1920s, the generation who came of age during WWI, his most famous works included “The Great Gatsby,” “The Beautiful and Damned,” and “This Side of Paradise.” Well-known for chronicling and satirizing the culture of wealth, extravagance, and ambition rampant in the 1920s, Fitzgerald’s works were perfect portrayals of life in the Jazz Age.

The girls I wrote about were not a type - they were a generation. Free spirits evolved through the war chaos and a final inevitable escape from restraint and inhibitions. If there is a difference, it is that the flappers today are perhaps less defiant, since their freedom is taken for granted and they are sure of it.

Clara Bow is the quintessence of what the term “flapper” signifies as a definite description. Pretty, impudent, superbly assured, as worldly wise, briefly clad and “hard-berled” as possible. There were hundreds of them - her prototypes. Now, completing the circle, there are thousands more patterning themselves after her.

Colleen Moore represents the young collegiate - the carefree, lovable child who rules bewildered but adoring parents with an iron hand. Who beats her brothers and beaus on the tennis courts, dances like a professional and has infallible methods for getting her own way. The public notoriously prefer glamour to realism. Pictures like Miss Moore’s flapper epics present a glamorous dream of youth and gaiety and swift, tapping feet. Youth - actual youth - is essentially crude. But the movies idealize it, even as Gershwin idealizes jazz in the Rhapsody in Blue.

It’s rather futile to analyze flappers. They are just girls all sorts of girls. Their one common trait being that they are young things with a splendid talent for life.

Document 7:

Citation: Rev. Hugh L. McMenamin [Roman Catholic priest], “Evils of Woman’s Revolt against the Old Standards,” *Current History*, October 1927

Look about you. The theatre, the magazine, the current fiction, the ballroom, the night clubs and the joyrides—all give evidence of an ever-increasing disregard for even the rudiments of decency in dress, deportment, conventions [standards], and conduct. Little by little the bars have been lowered, leaving out the few influences that held society in restraint. One need be neither prude nor puritan to feel that something is passing in the hearts and in the minds of the women of today that is leaving them cold and unwomanly. . . .

We may try to deceive ourselves and close our eyes to the prevailing flapper conduct. We may call boldness greater self-reliance, brazenness greater self-assertion, license greater freedom, and try to pardon immodesty in dress by calling it style and fashion, but the fact remains that deep down in our hearts we feel a sense of shame and pity. . . .
Modern economic conditions, with the mania for speedy profits, have been a powerful factor in producing the “New Woman,” inasmuch as they have dragged her into the commercial world and made her economically independent. It is quite impossible for a woman to engage successfully in business and politics and at the same time create a happy home. A woman cannot be a mother and a typist at the same time, and unfortunately she elects to be merely a wife, and out of that condition have arisen those temples of race suicide—our modern apartment houses—and the consequent grinding of the divorce mills.

Document 8:

Citation: “Want Moral Tone of Movies Raised,” *Washington Post*, June 23, 1922, p. 5.

Mr. Hays pledged the integrity and resources of “the men who have millions of dollars invested in motion pictures” to the fulfillment of any workable program which will benefit those who have “millions of children invested in moving pictures.”

In opening…Hays said:
“In America, 50 nationalities mean 50 languages, each incomprehensible to the other, but the picture of a mother is the same in any language. The movies are the greatest potentiality for morality in the world today, and it is my aim to establish through the cooperation of the public the highest possible moral and artistic standards in motion picture production.

“America must have its amusement, or America, like a baby deprived of its toy, will go ‘red.’ The movies provide the pastime of 20,000,000 persons daily, over one-half of whom are children.”

…Censorship is a labor-saving device. It removes the necessity of mothers guarding the welfare of their children, and so long as movies are made for children, we will have mawkish films.”

Document 9:

![Figure 2.2 Weekly Theater Admissions and US Population by Year](image)

*Figure 2.2 Weekly Theater Admissions and US Population by Year*

*Weekly Theater Admissions and Population (1922-2006)*

Data Sources: US Census Bureau: International Motion Picture Almanac 1947, 2008. (Steinberg 1980)
Citation: John T. McCutcheon, “The Happy Family,” Chicago Tribune, April 13, 1924
In the 1920s...

- Police funding: increased $11.4 million
- Arrests for Prohibition violations: increased 102+%
- Arrests for drunkenness and disorderly conduct: increased 41%
- Arrests for drunken driving: increased 81%
- Thefts and burglaries: increased 9%
- Homicides, assault and battery: increased 13%
- Number of federal convicts: increased 561%
- Federal prison population: increased 361%
- Total federal expenditures on penal institutions: increased 1000+%