

Anglo-American popular culture

Headings	Notes
The emergence of popular culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Popular culture is culture that is available to the majority of the people and not just to the rich and privileged.• Popular culture emerged in the 1920s as a result of new technologies, invented before the First World War. These were moving pictures, radio and gramophone records. TV began at the end of the 1930s but made little impact until after the Second World War.
Film The 'Silent Era': 1895-1927	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Lumière brothers invented moving pictures in 1895.• Within a few years, film was being used to tell stories and cinemas had opened in many cities and towns.• Film-making was mostly developed in France and Italy before 1914, but the disruption of the First World War opened the way for American film-makers. By the 1920s, over 80% of the world's films were made in America.• During the 'silent era' film-makers developed many genres of film - comedy, romance, crime, adventure, horror and westerns.• Film historians estimate that over 80% of silent films have been lost, so it is difficult to appreciate their quality.
Hollywood: Studios and stars	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• From the 1920s, Hollywood in California, with its reliable sunshine, became the centre of the American film industry.• The success of Hollywood was based on the studio system. In the 1920s, five major and some minor studios produced 800 films a year in a ruthless multibillion-dollar business.• The bosses of studios like MGM and Warner Brothers maximised profits by controlling the stories, directors, actors and, in many cases, cinemas too.• They developed the 'star system' in which a few actors and actresses were promoted as 'stars'.• There was Mary Pickford who was 'America's sweetheart', Clara Bow, '<i>the IT girl</i>' ('IT' was slang for 'sex appeal') and Rudolf Valentino whose death at 31 produced hysteria among his fans.• Stars had to sign contracts to work for only one studio. Their films received extensive publicity, fan clubs were encouraged and stories about their private lives were leaked to the press.
Keywords	Summary

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Hollywood: Studios and stars	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Another promotional idea was the Academy Awards for best film and best actors, better known as the Oscars, which began in 1928.
Charlie Chaplin (1889-1977)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• One of the most important stars of the silent era was Charlie Chaplin.• Born in London in 1889, he had a poverty-stricken childhood. As a boy he worked in the music halls and on a tour of America joined the Keystone Film studio, famous for its comedies about the Keystone Cops.• Chaplin developed his own character of the Tramp, which he played in over 70 pictures. Small, vulnerable and brave, the Tramp won the hearts of cinema audiences everywhere, and by 1919 Chaplain was earning \$10,000 a year.• In 1919, he joined several other film stars to set up a studio, United Artists. This allowed him to control his own films, which he wrote, acted in and directed.• His most famous films included <i>The Kid</i> (1919), his masterpiece, <i>The Gold Rush</i> (1925) and <i>The Circus</i> (1928).• Even after talking pictures came in he continued to make silent pictures like <i>City Lights</i> (1931) and <i>Modern Times</i> (1936).• But he was strongly opposed to fascism, and in 1940 produced his first 'talkie', <i>The Great Dictator</i>. Mocking Hitler, Chaplin played Adenoid Hynkel, ruler of Tomainia.• After the war, Chaplin was accused of being a communist and banned from America. He spent the rest of his life in Switzerland, making only a few (not very successful) films.
The start of the 'talkies'	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Talking pictures began with <i>The Jazz Singer</i> in 1927. It was so popular that all studios were making 'talkies' by 1929.• Because they cost more to make, talkies increased the power of the big studios.• Some stars (like Clara Bow) failed to make the transition but others flourished and new ones emerged like Greta Garbo, Clark Gable and Shirley Temple.• A new type of film, the musical, developed with new stars like Bing Crosby, Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers.
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The start of the 'talkies'	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Talkies increased the influence of American culture, with people around the world singing American songs, adopting American slang words like 'OK' or trying to speak with an American accent.
The British film industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Britain was slow to develop a film industry, and in the 1920s almost all films shown were American. To avoid complete American dominance, an Act, passed 1927 and renewed in 1938, required 20% of films in British cinemas to be British.• This rescued the industry from extinction. British film-makers standardised production and created a studio system.• They made small-budget films, mainly crime, comedy, musicals, stories from British history and celebrations of the Empire.• A number of British stars appeared, notably Gracie Fields in <i>Sing As We Go</i> (1934). Alfred Hitchcock emerged as Britain's greatest director with films such as <i>The 39 Steps</i> (1935) and <i>The Lady Vanishes</i> (1938). He later went to Hollywood.• British audiences were too small for the industry to produce the kind of lavish films the Americans could afford, and few British films were successful in the US.
Cinemas	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• From the 1920s to the 1950s, a majority of people on both sides of the Atlantic went to the cinema at least once a week.• To meet the demand, huge cinemas were built, often in the latest architectural style. Most were glamorous and luxurious.• Prices were kept low so that even during the Depression most people could afford a brief escape from the drabness of their everyday lives.• As well as the main picture, the show usually included a cheap B-rated film, a newsreel showing the latest events or a travelogue of exotic locations the audience could never hope to visit.
Censorship	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The popularity of films worried the older generation. This led to demands for censorship.• To stop the state intervening, the Americans produced the Hays Code. It set out what could or could not be dealt with in films and how various things were to be shown. For example, even married couples had to be shown sleeping in single beds.
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Censorship	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In Britain, a system of grading developed with films defined as suitable for different age groups. Local councils also ban a film from being shown in its locality.• Official censorship led to self-censorship. Studios did not make films showing social problems or the misery caused by the Depression.
Radio	
The early years	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 'Wireless telegraphy' was invented by Marconi in the 1890s and improved during the First World War. For the first 20 years it was used only for 'narrowcasting' (i.e. sending messages directly from one person to another).• 'Broadcasting' (sending out a message to anyone who happens to be listening) began in the United States after the First World War.
Commercial broadcasting in the US	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• From the start American radio stations were commercial, making their money by selling advertising.• There was little regulation so stations multiplied. By the 1930s, there were about 600.• Most were local, reporting local news and playing music. They also bought in drama programmes, sports reports and foreign news from larger radio companies, like NBC.• Politicians, both local and national, quickly realised the value of radio as a way of reaching the voters. In the depth of the Depression, Roosevelt broadcast his 'fireside chats' to win support for his economic policies.• After America joined the war, radio stations sent foreign correspondents overseas to report on events, encouraged support for the troops and sold war bonds.
Radio in Britain: Sir John Reith and the BBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Radio developed very differently in Britain. After a brief period of commercial broadcasting from 1922, the government set up a 'public service' broadcasting company, the BBC. in 1927.• The BBC was a monopoly (i.e. no competitors allowed). Its money came from a licence fee which anyone who owned a radio set had to pay. It was not allowed to broadcast advertisements.• The BBC's first Director General was Sir John Reith, an austere Scotsman.• He believed the BBC should inform and educate its audience as well as entertain them and he was determined to keep it independent of politicians and of commercial interests.
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The impact of films and radio	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• American radio and films helped to reinforce racial stereotypes with popular films like <i>The Jazz Singer</i> and <i>Gone With The Wind</i> presenting unflattering images of black people.• By broadcasting commentaries on sporting events radio increased the number of people who were interested in sports.
Bing Crosby (1903-1977)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Harry Lillis 'Bing' Crosby was born in the US in 1903. He dropped out of law school to become a singer in a band, the Rhythm Boys.• Crosby quickly emerged as the leading singer and in 1928 he had his first solo hit with 'Ol' Man River'.• In 1932, he starred in his first full-length feature film, <i>The Big Broadcast</i>, and in the 1930s he made several successful musicals. His hit song 'White Christmas', from the 1942 film <i>Holiday Inn</i>, became the biggest hit song of all time, selling over 100,000 million copies.• During the war he teamed up with the comedian Bob Hope to make <i>The Road to Singapore</i>, the first of a series of lighthearted 'road movies'.• He also showed his talent as an actor in the 1944 film, <i>Going My Way</i>, for which he won an Oscar. Altogether he starred in 59 films.• Through the 1930s and 1940s, Crosby combined his film career with a weekly radio show in which he sang and presented other acts.• Through his films and radio he moulded the popular music of his time, singing jazz and rhythm and blues as well as popular romantic songs.• He developed a relaxed, conversational style of singing, known as 'crooning' which looked easy, though he worked hard at it.• He spent a great deal of time entertaining the US forces during the Second World War. In a poll in 1945, troops chose him as the person who did most to raise their morale during the war.• Crosby continued to work on his career as an entertainer until his death in 1977.
Keywords	Summary

Anglo-American Pop Culture – Part One

Radio and Cinema Influence in the 1920s and 1930s

1. The American economy's boom facilitated mass production and innovative advertising strategies.
2. The Roaring Twenties, marked by leisure and entertainment, saw American cultural elements rapidly influencing global music, dance, and cinema.
3. Radio and Cinema became pivotal in shaping public entertainment, offering new forms of leisure and cultural expression.
4. American trends in popular culture extended to Britain and continental Europe, affecting local entertainment landscapes.
5. Improvements in radio and film technology made these mediums more accessible and enjoyable for the masses.
6. The establishment of broadcasting corporations and film production standards helped shape the industry's growth and direction.
7. New celebrities emerged from these industries, becoming symbols of the era's cultural shift such as Marilyn Monroe, Charlie Chaplin and Bing Crosby.

Radio in Britain and Germany

1. The launch of radio broadcasting in 1922 in Britain, with the BBC gaining a monopoly, signifying the medium's institutionalisation.
2. In Germany, radio became a widespread tool for entertainment and later, under Nazi rule, for propaganda.
3. Radio brought news, music, and educational content into homes, becoming a central part of daily life.
4. The 1930s saw enhancements in radio reception quality, broadening the medium's appeal.
5. Content ranged from variety shows to educational programs, catering to a wide audience.
6. In Nazi Germany, radio served as a significant tool for spreading ideological messages.
7. Radio played a key role in cultural exchange and the dissemination of new musical trends.

Cinema in Britain and Germany

1. Dominance of Hollywood in film production, with significant influences on global cinema trends.
2. Transition from silent films to "talkies" marked a pivotal change in film consumption and production.
3. Despite Hollywood's dominance, Britain and Europe contributed notable works, including Germany's "The Cabinet of Dr Caligari".
4. American films became a staple in British cinemas, while European cinema maintained its distinct identity.
5. Advances in film technology enhanced storytelling and visual effects, broadening cinema's appeal.
6. Cinema became a popular form of entertainment, with attendance soaring during the 1920s and 1930s.
7. Films began to reflect societal changes and political ideologies, influencing public opinion and culture.
8. Political upheavals, especially in Germany, affected the film industry's dynamics, with some artists fleeing due to persecution.

Jazz Age

1. Jazz, originating from New Orleans, epitomised the 1920s, spreading its rhythmic beats to Europe, influencing London and Paris nightlife.
2. In Europe, jazz became a symbol of modernity and rebellion, with artists like Louis Armstrong leading the wave, especially in venues frequented by the avant-garde.
3. The era introduced energetic dances such as the Charleston, which captivated the youth and became synonymous with the Jazz Age's liberating spirit.
4. In countries like Germany, jazz acted as a form of resistance against conservative values, yet it also faced backlash for its association with American culture and African American origins.
5. Jazz influenced other art forms, inspiring movements in literature, visual arts, and even influencing early sound cinema with its improvisational style.
6. Despite originating in the United States, jazz's impact was global, affecting musical traditions and social dances across continents.

Cinema Revolution

1. The late 1920s revolutionised cinema with the advent of "talkies," beginning with films like "The Jazz Singer," which transformed audience expectations and the film industry.
2. Hollywood's film industry cemented its global influence during this period, exporting American culture through its productions and stars.
3. Innovations in sound recording, cinematography, and special effects during this era significantly enhanced the cinematic experience.
4. Cinema influenced fashion, behaviour, and language, making movie stars into global icons and shaping international trends.
5. The arrival of talkies led to the rapid decline of silent films, forcing many actors and directors to adapt or fade into obscurity.
6. This era saw the expansion of film genres, including musicals, dramas, and comedies, broadening cinema's appeal.
7. The revolutionary nature of cinema, especially its influence on morals and society, prompted the establishment of film codes and censorship practices.

The British Film Industry

1. The Cinematograph Films Act of 1927 aimed to support the British film industry by mandating quotas for British films, encouraging domestic production.
2. British cinema focused on a variety of genres, including crime, comedy, and historical films, reflecting the country's diverse cultural heritage.
3. The era saw the rise of Alfred Hitchcock, whose innovative techniques in suspense and psychological thriller genres gained him international acclaim.
4. The industry innovated within its means, focusing on strong narratives and character-driven stories, often reflecting British societal themes.
5. The British government's involvement, through quotas and later direct support, was crucial in sustaining the industry during tough economic times.
6. British films contributed significantly to the national culture, offering a cinematic mirror to Britain's societal changes and challenges.

Anglo-American Pop Culture – Part Two

Hollywood

1. The 1920s and 1930s are considered the Golden Age of Hollywood, characterised by the industry's transformation through the introduction of sound in movies.
2. Major studios like MGM, Warner Bros., and Paramount controlled production, distribution, and exhibition, creating star systems and iconic films.
3. This era saw significant technological advancements, including the development of Technicolor, enhancing film's appeal with vibrant colours.
4. Despite economic hardships, cinema remained a popular escape for the public, with studios producing films that ranged from escapism to social commentary.
5. Hollywood's Golden Age was marked by the establishment and popularity of genres such as musicals, gangster films, and screwball comedies.
6. To address moral concerns, Hollywood adopted the Hays Code in the 1930s, regulating content to ensure movies adhered to certain moral standards.
7. Hollywood films and stars gained international fame, spreading American culture globally and influencing foreign film industries.

Sport and Radio

1. Radio brought sports to the masses, with live broadcasts of baseball, boxing, and football becoming popular in the 1920s and 1930s.
2. Radio enabled people who couldn't attend games to experience the excitement live, democratising access to sports entertainment.
3. Athletes like Babe Ruth and Joe Louis became household names, their exploits and personalities brought into homes through radio, enhancing their legendary status.
4. This era saw the development of sports commentary, with commentators becoming key figures in shaping the listener's experience and understanding of the games.
5. Radio broadcasts helped solidify fan cultures, with local and national identities forming around teams, fostering community spirit and loyalty.
6. Sponsorships and advertising during sports broadcasts opened new revenue streams for both the broadcasting and sports industries.
7. International sports events, such as the Olympics, were broadcast worldwide, promoting international camaraderie and competition.

Radio and Cinema in World War II

1. Both radio and cinema were harnessed by all sides as powerful propaganda tools, disseminating information, boosting morale, and influencing public opinion during WWII.
2. They provided essential entertainment and escape for both soldiers and civilians, offering news, music, and films that helped sustain morale in difficult times.
3. Governments used radio broadcasts and cinematic newsreels to educate the public on war efforts, rationing, and how to support the troops.
4. Authorities tightly controlled radio and cinema content to ensure it aligned with national interests, censoring information deemed harmful to the war effort.
5. The war accelerated technological advancements in both media, including improvements in radio transmission and portable film equipment for war correspondents.
6. Allied forces collaborated in producing and sharing radio programs and films to strengthen their cultural ties and unified message against the Axis powers.
7. The experiences of WWII significantly influenced post-war radio and cinema, leading to a greater focus on international affairs, human rights, and the realities of war.

The Impact of Radio and Cinema

1. Radio and cinema played pivotal roles in shaping 20th-century culture, influencing music, fashion, language, and social norms.
2. They marked the beginning of the mass communication era, enabling rapid dissemination of information and entertainment to a global audience.
3. Both mediums were powerful tools for political messaging, capable of influencing public opinion and mobilising populations for social and political causes.
4. The rise of radio and cinema contributed significantly to the economy, creating new industries, job opportunities, and advertising methods.
5. They facilitated the globalisation of culture, with Hollywood films and radio broadcasts spreading American culture worldwide, while also bringing global cultures to the U.S.
6. Advancements in technology driven by radio and cinema, such as sound recording and special effects, set the stage for future media developments.
7. Beyond entertainment, they served educational purposes, disseminating knowledge, news, and cultural awareness to broad audiences.