

# 1920's vs. 1960's essay sample

[Design](#), [Fashion](#)



Over the past century, people living in the United States have experienced many changes. As the times change, so do the people. In the 1920's, people acted differently then compared to the people in the 1960's. Yet, they both have one thing in common; they shaped our history.

In the 1920's, about 106, 521, 537 people inhabited the United States. It was a rough period in our history, with about 2, 132, 000 people unemployed and murder, swindles, and racketeering as the most popular crimes. The life expectancy of men and women during the 1920's was 53. 6 years and 54. 6 years respectively. Amazingly, the illiteracy rate was at a new low of only 6% of the population during this time period. Yet, despite all the aspects, which today we might see as unfavorable, this decade was full of many new and exciting things. From the way they dressed, to the music styles, and finally to the controversial issues, the 1920's were a nonstop era of change.

Yet, as we move ahead to the 1960's, life was very different. There were around 177, 830, 000 people living in the United States. Unfortunately, as the population increased, so did the number of people who were unemployed, which was close to 3, 852, 000 people. The life expectancy for men and women also increased to 66. 6 years and 73. 1 years respectively. Yet, unlike the 1920's, a teacher's salary at \$5, 174 became more than the average salary at \$4, 743. This era was greatly influenced by television and like the 1920's, people moved away from conservative thinking and onto new revolutionary ways of thinking.

Fashion in the 1920's for men was much like it was in the early teens. The sacque suite was appropriate day dress and only natural colored shirts were

worn with these suits. Shaped silks ties and bowler hats completed this outfit. Knickerbockers, also known as knickers, were very popular form of casual wear, which were usually worn with Norfolk coats or golf coats. It was not until 1925 did baggy pants come into popularity, when Oxford University, banned knickers in the classroom. These baggy pants were loose enough to easily slide over knickers. For the evening, the tailcoat, a started white shirt, and a top hat were worn. Tuxedos were very popular but not yet acceptable. Tightly fitting suits, which were considered an expression for Jazz music, passed in and out of fashion during the 1920's. These jackets were long and tight-waisted and the trousers were tight and stove-pipe skinny. Women's fashion in the 1920's became less formal. Since production methods made production easier, clothing became more affordable. Therefore, the average women's fashion sense became more sophisticated. Because of strong feminine liberation, the corset was discarded.

The camisole replaced the corset, and in the beginning of the 1920's, a camisole and bloomers kept a woman decently covered beneath her clothing. For the first time in centuries, women's legs were seen and a more masculine look became popular, including flattened breasts and hips and a bobbed hairstyle. Simple ensembles, scarves and inexpensive jewelry became popular. The zipper also became a popular item on many clothing items in the 1920's. Makeup became an important fashion trend due to famous female movie stars. During the 1920's, waistlines of skirts and pants were at the waist, but were loose and not fitted. Suits and dresses were both worn very loose. In 1924, the waistline eventually fell to the hop but clothes were still worn baggy. In 1925, dresses with no waistlines became

popular and in 1928 styles changed again. Hemlines rose to the knee and dresses became more fitted.

In the beginning of the 1960's, men's fashion usually consisted of a casual plaid and button down shirt with a crew cut as their popular hairstyle. As the decade progressed, there was a great change for men. They began to wear their hair longer and wider, with beards and mustaches. They also began to wear brighter colors, double-breasted suits and turtlenecks. Towards the end of the 1960's, many men wore patterned ties up to 5 inches wide, even with striped suits. Women in the early 1960's wore bouffant hairstyles, and like the 1920's, knee length dresses. However, later in the decade, mini skirts, or hot pants, with go-go boots became popular. These skirts revealed their legs as bodywear revealed their curves. Women's hairstyles even changed. Women either wore their hair very short or long and lanky. Also, peasant skirts, or granny dresses, and chunky shoes somehow came into fashion during this period of time too. By the end of the decade, unisex dressing was very popular especially with the hippies. Both sexes wore bell-bottom jeans, love beads, and embellished T-shirts. This was also the era of the Afro, which both sexes of African Americans wore.

"There's nothing surer; the rich get richer and the poor get poorer." This was considered the beliefs of the roaring 20's. The Cotton Club was the first club that was opened to both white and black people. Coincidentally, it was packed nightly. The 1920's is known as the Jazz Age. During this time period, the best selling pop hits were sentimental ballads, old-fashioned waltzes, and nonsense songs. In 1925, the Grand Ole Opry was transmitted on radio from

Nashville for the first time. People were traveling to more places, which influenced their songs. Many of the songs produced during this period were about places such as the songs " Chicago" and " California Here I Come."

In the 1960's, America was ready for a change. Black rhythm and blues known as Motown became popular. Bob Dylan helped bring about a folk music revival during this time also. The Beach Boys came along and their music appealed to high schoolers. At the same time, The Beatles emerged from England with an innovative rock music that appealed to all ages. Unlike the 1920's, music changed greatly throughout the 1960's, mostly because of the drug scene. Highly amplified and improvisational music called Acid Rock, and more mellow psychedelic rock gained popularity in the mid 1960's. In the summer of 1969, the musical phenomenon of the decade was Woodstock. It was a three-day music festival that drew 400, 000 hippies and featured peace, love, and happiness... and LSD.

Many controversial issues came about in the 1920's. Early in the decade, the Nineteenth Amendment was passed and women were allowed to vote in national elections. Prohibition began around this time too. On January 16, 1920, the Volstead Act became effective and this made the sale of a drink containing as much as half an ounce of alcohol illegal. Racial tensions were high during this time and the Klu Klux Klan was very active. By the end of the 1920's, the New York Stock Exchange was more active then it had ever been. However, on October 24, 1929 the stock market crashed and the nation ended the 1920s in a depression. The 1920s started as an era of

happy changes, yet as the decade progressed more changes occurred but not all were for the best.

The issues of the 1960s were not much different. Many of the same issues dealt with race. The Civil Rights movement in the 1960s began peacefully with Martin Luther King Jr. Whites and Jews joined his sit-ins and peaceful protests. Yet, in the 1920s, white and Jews would have never joined such a movement. Also during this time period, Women's Liberation was born. The 1920s showed some signs of women wanted to gain more rights, but it was not until the 1960s did the questioning of unequal treatment of women come to the attention of the Supreme Court. The Civil Right Act of 1964 was amended to include gender. Abortion and artificial insemination was another controversial issue during the 1960s. However, in 1967 both became legal in some states.

Unlike the years that preceded the 1960s, prayer in public schools became unconstitutional. As the 1960s progressed, respect for authority declined among the youth and crime rates soared to nine times the rate in the 1950s. The hippie movement endorsed drugs, rock music, mystic religions, and sexual freedom. Yet, one of our proudest moments in history occurred in 1961. Alan Shepard was the first American in space. However, two years later in 1963, President John F. Kennedy was assassinated just around the time the Vietnam war was started. There was lots of controversy of whether or not the United States should have entered the war. The 1960s ended with turmoil over Vietnam and the role the United States played in it. Many

people were disappointed that the United States even got involved. Yet others felt that it was our duty.

The 1920's were not completely different then the 1960's. The 1920's were a period of women rebelling in both their style of dress and their social actions. This era was filled with changes as was the 1960's. The hippie movement which included drugs and rock and roll did not effect the country as much as some of the things did in the 1920's, but all the changes that did occur in both eras shaped our history and paved the way for new things to come in the future.