



Education and Culture

Objectives

1. Explain how public education changed after 1870.
2. Identify new American writers and the topics they wrote about.
3. Describe the growth of the American newspaper industry.

Prepare to Read

Reading Skill

Use Popular Word Origins

Some words and phrases do not come from formal languages. Instead, they arise from popular use. For example, in the previous section, you saw that *basketball* got its name because it was originally played using peach baskets. The term *basketball* remained even when people stopped using real baskets to play with. Other words and phrases also have origins in popular usage that have since gone out of date.

Vocabulary Builder

High-Use Words

minimum, p. 632

circuit, p. 633

Key Terms and People

compulsory education, p. 632

realist, p. 634

Mark Twain, p. 634

Joseph Pulitzer, p. 635

yellow journalism, p. 635

★ **Background Knowledge** You have learned how northern states established tax-supported public schools in the mid-1800s. In this section, you will learn how the expansion of public education was linked to other changes in American culture.

Main Idea

States took steps to expand education, including requiring children to attend school.

Educating Americans

Before 1870, fewer than half of American children went to school. Many attended one-room schoolhouses, with all age levels and only one teacher. As industry grew, people realized that the nation needed an educated workforce. As a result, states improved public schools at all levels.

Education Expands In 1852, Massachusetts passed the first compulsory education law. **Compulsory education** is the requirement that children attend school up to a certain age. Other states in the North, Midwest, and West followed. Most states required a minimum tenth-grade education.

In the South, which had no tradition of public schools, the Freedmen's Bureau built grade schools for both white and black students. Southern states were more reluctant to pass compulsory education laws than states in the North or West. Still, by 1918, every state required children to attend school.

Vocabulary Builder

minimum (MIHN ah muhm) *adj.*
smallest amount possible or allowed

After the Civil War, many cities and towns built public high schools. By 1900, there were 6,000 high schools in the country. Still, not until 1950 did the majority of Americans of high school age graduate.

Higher education also expanded. New private colleges for both women and men opened. Many states built universities that offered free or low-cost education.

The School Day For elementary school students, the typical school day lasted from 8:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. Pupils learned the “three Rs”: reading, ’riting, and ’rithmetic.

The most widely used textbooks were *McGuffey’s Eclectic Readers*. Students memorized and recited lessons that had titles like “Waste Not, Want Not.” Such poems and stories taught not only reading but also moral values and the Christian religion.

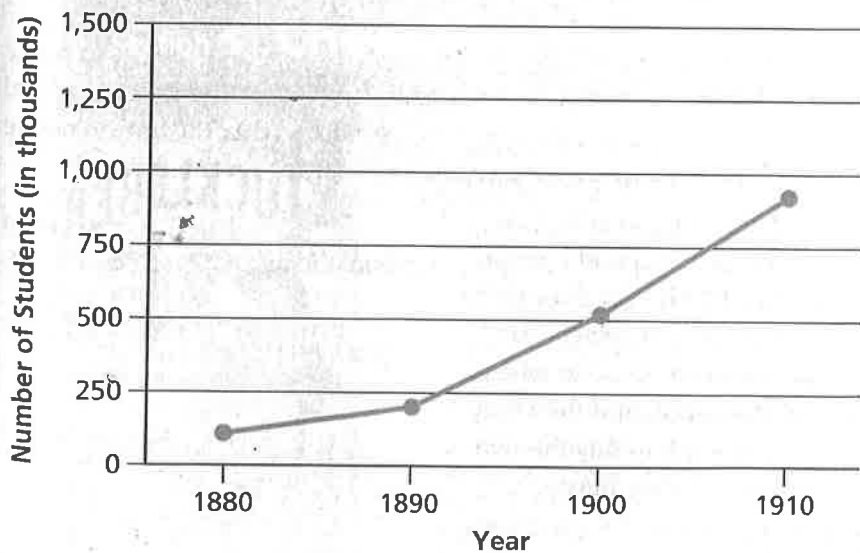
Education for Adults Older Americans also got more opportunity to widen their knowledge. Wealthy individuals such as Andrew Carnegie gave money to towns and cities to build public libraries. Libraries offered more than books and magazines. Speakers often gave talks on important topics of the day.

In 1874, a Methodist minister opened a summer school for Bible teachers along Lake Chautauqua (shuh TAWK wuh) in New York. The next year, the camp was opened to the public. Mostly middle-class men and women gathered at Chautauqua to hear lectures on a wide variety of subjects. The Chautauqua Society later began sending out traveling companies on a wide circuit. In time, Chautauquas reached as many as 5 million people in 10,000 towns each year.

Checkpoint How did states expand public education?

Vocabulary Builder
circuit (SIR kuht) *n.* route repeatedly traveled

High School Enrollment, 1880–1910



Source: *Historical Statistics of the United States*

Reading Charts

Skills Activity

The late 1800s saw a dramatic rise in public high school enrollment.

(a) **Read a Chart** How many Americans attended public high schools in 1880? In 1910?

(b) **Distinguish Relevant Information** Which of the following might help you understand the reasons for the trend shown on the graph: a mathematics textbook from 1890; a list showing when states passed compulsory education laws; a population graph? Explain.

Main Idea

A new generation of American writers tried to describe real life as it was.

New American Writers

As learning became available to more people, Americans began to read more books and magazines. Many bestsellers were dime novels, low-priced paperbacks that often told thrilling tales of the "Wild West." One popular writer, Horatio Alger, wrote "rags-to-riches" stories about poor boys who became successful through hard work, courage, and honesty.

Realism Other American writers were **realists**, writers who try to show life as it is. They often emphasized the harsh side. Some, such as Stephen Crane, had been newspaper reporters. Crane depicted the hardships of slum life in his novel *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*.

California-born Jack London wrote of miners and sailors who risked their lives in backbreaking jobs. Kate Chopin shocked readers with *The Awakening*, a novel about an unhappily married woman. The poems of Paul Laurence Dunbar described the joys and sorrows of black life. He was the first African American to earn a living as a writer.



Use Popular Word Origins

Based on context clues, what do you think the phrase *pen name* means? What do you think was the origin of this term?

Mark Twain The most popular author of the time was Mark Twain, the pen name of Samuel Clemens. Twain made his stories realistic by capturing the speech patterns of southerners who lived and worked along the Mississippi River.

Twain set his novel *Huckleberry Finn* in the days before the Civil War. Huck, an uneducated boy, and Jim, an escaped slave, raft down the Mississippi River together. Though brought up to believe slavery is right, Huck comes to respect Jim and decides to help him win his freedom.

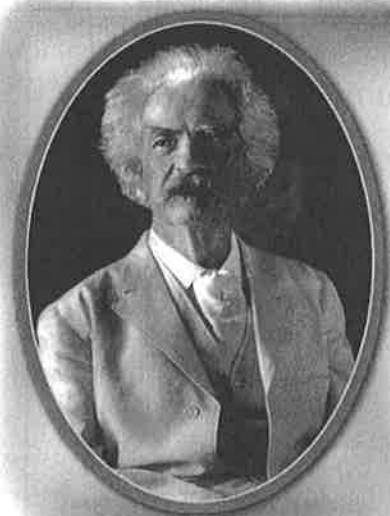
Some parents complained that Huck was a crude character who would have a bad effect on children. But today, many critics consider *Huckleberry Finn* to be one of the greatest American novels.

Huckleberry Finn

In this passage from Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*, shown below, Huck recounts a conversation with his friend Jim, an escaped slave.

Critical Thinking: Evaluate Information How does the language in this passage give a sense of realism?

Checkpoint What kinds of topics did realists write about?



Mark Twain

“He was saying how the first thing he would do when he got to a free State he would go to saving up money and never spend a single cent, and when he got enough he would buy his wife, which was owned on a farm close to where Miss Watson lived; and then they would both work to buy the two children, and if their master wouldn't sell them, they'd get an Ab'litionist to go and steal them.”



Cover of an early edition of *Huckleberry Finn*

A Newspaper Boom

The number of American newspapers grew dramatically in the late 1800s. By 1900, half the newspapers in the world were printed in the United States.

Causes The spread of education was one reason for the growth of the newspaper industry. As more Americans could read, they bought more newspapers and magazines.

The newspaper boom was also linked to urbanization. In towns and villages, neighbors could share news face to face. In cities, people needed newspapers to stay informed.

A New Kind of Newspaper A Hungarian immigrant, Joseph Pulitzer, created the first modern, mass-circulation newspaper. In 1883, Pulitzer bought the *New York World*. He immediately cut the price so that more people could afford it.

Pulitzer added crowd-pleasing features to his newspaper, including color comics. The Yellow Kid, a tough but sweet slum boy, became the first popular American comic strip character.

The *New York World* became known for sensational headlines that screamed of crime and scandal. Readership skyrocketed, and other papers followed his lead. Because of the Yellow Kid, critics coined the term **yellow journalism** to describe the sensational reporting style of the *New York World* and other papers.

Checkpoint Why did the newspaper industry grow?

★ **Looking Back and Ahead** In this section, you saw how education increased the popularity and influence of newspapers. In the next chapter, you will see how newspapers and magazines contributed to a growing reform movement.

Main Idea

Education contributed to a rapid growth in American newspapers.



The Yellow Kid

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Comprehension and Critical Thinking

- (a) **Describe** What were schools like before 1870?

(b) **Draw Inferences** Why do you think compulsory education laws were important for the industrialized North?
- (a) **Identify** What were the goals of realists?

(b) **Apply Information** How did Mark Twain's use of language make his stories more realistic?

Reading Skill

- Use Popular Word Origins** The phrase "yellow journalism" is still used to describe one type of reporting. How has the meaning separated from its origin?

Vocabulary Builder

- Read each sentence below. If the sentence is true, write YES and explain why. If the sentence is not true, write NO and explain why not.
- Yellow journalism** used sensational headlines to attract readers.

- Mark Twain was not a realist because he wrote about people.
- Compulsory education** allowed parents to choose whether or not to send children to school.

Writing

- Do you think memorizing and reciting lessons from books like *McGuffey's Readers* is a useful way for children to learn? Write a paragraph explaining your opinion. Give at least two reasons.