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Abstract: Presents an overview of the Lost Generation, a term used to describe the young adults of the 1920s and 1930s, who grew up in the aftermath of World War I. Details on Stein's literary salon in Paris which became a haven for expatriate Americans, including such modernists as Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Sherwood Anderson, and the poet Ezra Pound; Overview on F. Scott Fitzgerald; Overview on John Dos Passos; Overview on Ernest Hemingway; Legacy of the Lost Generation.

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Chapter Two: Modern Writers**[Gertrude Stein, 1874-1946](#)**

Stein's literary salon in Paris became a haven for expatriate Americans, including such modernists as Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Sherwood Anderson, and the poet Ezra Pound. Stein herself was a respected and influential writer. She became known for "stream-of-consciousness" works, which emphasized sound and images rather than meaning. An example of this is her famous line, "Rose is a rose is a rose is a rose." Her "Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas," Stein's secretary and lover, showed many of the same characteristics.

[F. Scott Fitzgerald, 1896-1940](#)

F. Scott Fitzgerald is in some sense the epitome of the Lost Generation and the "Jazz Age" they inhabited. A native of St. Paul, Minnesota, he was born into a comfortable middle-class family. He was distantly related to nineteenth century Maryland poet Francis Scott Key, author of the "Star Spangled Banner."

Fitzgerald briefly attended Princeton University, but left to join the military when the U.S. entered World War I. In 1920 he published his first novel, "This Side of Paradise," which highlighted the lives of his young and sophisticated contemporaries. Shortly thereafter, he married Zelda Sayre, a beautiful Southern belle he had met while stationed in Alabama.

The couple married soon after the publication of Fitzgerald's first book, and moved to New York City. They lived the high life he described in his books, spending money easily and staying up late dancing and drinking gin. Fitzgerald continued to publish novels, including his masterpiece, "The Great Gatsby" (1925), about a wealthy bootlegger whose empty life eventually catches up with him. Success did not last, however. Zelda began sinking into mental illness, and the couple was living beyond their means. Fitzgerald, struggling with alcoholism, eventually became a Hollywood screenwriter. He died in 1940.

[John Dos Passos, 1896-1970](#)

John Dos Passos, a native of Chicago, made his name as a historical novelist whose works experimented with stream-of-consciousness techniques. A 1916 graduate of Harvard University, he served as an ambulance driver during World War I (as did Hemingway). He began his literary career in the early 1920s, first achieving success with the 1921 novel "Three Soldiers." He followed this in 1925 with "Manhattan Transfer." Like the work of Irish writer James Joyce, the book profiles a city in stream-of-conscious fashion.

Dos Passos further developed this technique in the novels "The 42nd Parallel" (1930); "Nineteen Nineteen" (1932); and "The Big Money" (1936). These works were published together in 1937 as the trilogy "U.S.A." In these books, Dos Passos made use of material such as newspaper quotations and brief biographies to give a sense of life to early twentieth century America. After World War II, his early left-wing views changed to more conservative politics. He continued, however, to comment on the American scene.

[Ernest Hemingway, 1899-1961](#)

Hemingway was born into a conventional middle-class family in Oak Park, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago. He joined the Italian Army in World War I, serving as an ambulance driver. His wartime experiences led to some of his most powerful fiction, including the 1929 novel "A Farewell to Arms." His stark, realistic prose -- mostly bare of adjectives and other adornment -- presented one of the earliest pictures of the Lost Generation's disillusionment with pre-war life.

This disillusionment is obvious in his 1926 novel "The Sun Also Rises," a book that might be called an anthem to the Lost Generation. The novel tells the story of several American expatriates who drift from one adventure to another in Paris and Spain. Three years later, he published "A Farewell to Arms," the tersely told love affair between a World War I ambulance driver (based on Hemingway himself) and an English nurse.

[Chapter Three: Legacy](#)

The Lost Generation enjoyed its heyday in the 1920s and 1930s, but began to fade with the approach of World War II. In the United States, at least, the war years called for a kind of forthright patriotism and "can-do" attitude that seemed at odds with the Lost Generation's disillusionment and biting satire. By war's end, several leading writers had died, including F. Scott Fitzgerald and Sherwood Anderson. In Fitzgerald's case, his death may have been due to the overindulgence during the era that made him famous.

Other authors lived longer, but suffered some of the same problems. Ernest Hemingway continued to write successfully into the early 1950s, but fell prey to alcoholism and mental illness. In addition, three of his four marriages ended in divorce. Hemingway finally committed suicide, shooting himself in 1961. A number of his works, including the memoir "A Moveable Feast" (1964), were published after his death.

The Lost Generation continues to exert a powerful hold on the American imagination. The works of Hemingway, Fitzgerald, and William Faulkner, for example, have sold well since they were first written and continue to be adapted for television and the movies.

According to William Strauss and Neil Howe, who have studied the patterns that recur in American generations, there are many parallels between the Lost Generation of the early twentieth century and the so-called "Generation X" or "13th Generation." They define them as "Nomads," pragmatic and loner figures in comparison to the more pro-authority "Prophet" generations which preceded them (the "Missionary" and "Boomer" generations respectively).

Both the Lost Generation and Generation X, for example, for example, came of age during a period of economic prosperity but increasing debates over morality and culture. The cultural figures produced so far by "Gen X" have often displayed a biting, pragmatic attitude toward life, similar to that of Fitzgerald, Hemingway, and their contemporaries.

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