

Directions: After completing the reading, respond to each of the following questions in a short paragraph.

1. Why did Europeans and Americans have good reasons to feel optimistic at the dawn of the 20th century?
2. Why would some consider this era of rapid growth to be an age of decadence?
3. What social groups were challenging the traditional aristocratic elites and how?
4. Why would the sinking of the *Titanic* disrupt the optimistic faith in progress that many people shared during this era?
5. Was this a beautiful era or not? Justify your response.