

CHAPTER

14

1945–1960

Postwar America

❧ The Big Ideas ❧

SECTION 1: Truman and Eisenhower

The fate of nations is forever changed by monumental world events. After World War II, the Truman and Eisenhower administrations set out to help the nation adjust to peacetime.

SECTION 2: The Affluent Society

Societies change over time. The postwar economic boom brought great changes to society, including the ways many Americans worked and lived.

SECTION 3: Popular Culture of the 1950s

Societies change over time. During the carefree and prosperous 1950s, Americans turned to television, new forms of music, cinema, and literature for entertainment.

SECTION 4: The Other Side of American Life

Societies change over time. Not everyone in the United States prospered during the nation's postwar boom, as millions of minorities and rural whites struggled daily with poverty.



The American Vision: Modern Times Video The Chapter 14 video, "America Takes to the Roads," describes the cultural impact of the automobile and its importance to the growing baby boom generation.



1944
• GI Bill enacted

Truman
1945–1953

1946
• Series of work strikes
plagues country

1947
• Levittown
construction
begins

1948
• Truman elected
president



United
States

PRESIDENTS

1944

1948

1952



World

1946
• Juan Perón elected
president of
Argentina

1948
• South Africa
introduces apartheid

1952
• Scientists led by Edward
Teller develop hydrogen
bomb



These confident newlyweds capture the prosperous attitude of postwar America.

1953

- Lucille Ball gives birth in real life and on her television show



1955

- Salk polio vaccine becomes widely available

1956

- Elvis Presley appears on *The Ed Sullivan Show*
- Federal Highway Act passed

1957

- Estimated 40 million television sets in use in United States



1958

- Galbraith's *The Affluent Society* published

Eisenhower
1953–1961



1956

1960

1954

- Gamal Abdel Nasser takes power in Egypt

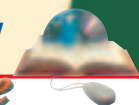
1956

- Suez Canal crisis erupts

1957

- USSR launches *Sputnik I* and *Sputnik II* satellites

HISTORY
Online



Chapter Overview

Visit the *American Vision: Modern Times* Web site at tav.mt.glencoe.com and click on **Chapter Overviews—Chapter 14** to preview chapter information.

Preparing to Read Chapter 14

Reading Skill

Question-Answer Relationships

In the last chapter, we looked at questions that require answers directly from the book. There are other questions that ask you to use information based on your experiences and opinions. These questions ask you to analyze and interpret information in your textbook. It is important to recognize the difference between the different types of questions so that you know where to find the answers—in the book or in your head.

One type of question is called “author and you” because you need to use information from the book and from your own experiences to supply the answer. Another type is called “on your own” because it comes from your prior knowledge and experiences. In both cases, the information in the book may influence your answer, but it is not the primary source. Some people call these types of questions text-implicit. This means that the answer is somewhat hidden and may require that you use information from other sources, such as your own experiences.

Read the following paragraph about the role of women during the 1950s. Then read the questions below and discuss the answers with a partner.

QUESTION-ANSWER RELATIONSHIPS

Remember to use evidence from the text as well as your opinions and experiences to answer text-implicit questions.

Many women focused on their traditional role of homemaker during the 1950s. . . . Many Americans assumed that a good mother should stay home to take care of her children.

“Let’s face it, girls,” declared one female writer in *Better Homes and Gardens* in April 1955, “that wonderful guy in your house—and in mine—is building your house, your happiness and the opportunities that will come to your children.” The magazine advised stay-at-home wives to “set their sights on a happy home, a host of friends and a bright future through success in HIS job.” (page 677)

Question: How did society view women during the 1950s?

This is an “author and you” question because you need to use information from the text as well as your own knowledge to provide the answer.

Question: How would readers interpret this article today?

This is an “on your own” question because it requires you to think about your own knowledge, opinions, and experiences.

Apply the Skill

Look closely at the questions in each section assessment and in the chapter assessment. Many of those are examples of either “author and you” or “on your own” questions. As you answer these questions, determine for each what type of question it is.



Historical Analysis Skill

Analysis Skill Standard CS2

Analyzing and Understanding Change

Chronological and Spatial Thinking You should learn to analyze how change happens at different rates at different times. You should also understand that some aspects can change while others remain the same, and that change is complicated and affects not only technology and politics but also values and beliefs.

Do you remember a time when everyone in your family was sick? Maybe it was a cold that was passed around your house. Did you notice that everyone who became sick recovered from their illnesses at different rates? The economies of countries are similar in that they expand and contract at different rates at different times. In fact, the same language used in the health field is often used to describe the economy of a country.

Historians understand that change in a nation's history is complex and can occur at different rates at different times. Like your families, economies may be quick or slow to recover from a recession, depression, or war.

Read the following passage about the concerns of Americans about the postwar economy of the United States.

After the war many Americans feared the return to a peacetime economy. They worried that after military production halted and millions of former soldiers glutted the labor market, unemployment and recession might sweep the country. (page 667)

You learned in the previous chapter that when World War II ended, the economies of Germany, Japan, and Great Britain were in ruins. As the nations of Europe and Asia set out to rebuild, they relied upon the United States to provide the manufactured goods necessary for reconstruction.

What effects do you think the reconstruction efforts had upon the U.S. economy? Do you think these effects would have an impact on the lives of Americans? Can you think of other events that would affect the economy of the United States?

Apply the Skill

Before you read, make a prediction about the economy of the United States in the 1950s. As you read the chapter, write down the individual events and issues that played a role in the postwar economy, and how they brought about change. Make sure you outline the impact of politics, technology, and values and beliefs each had on the economy. After reading the chapter, review your prediction. Identify and analyze the differences between your prediction and actual events.



Truman and Eisenhower

Guide to Reading

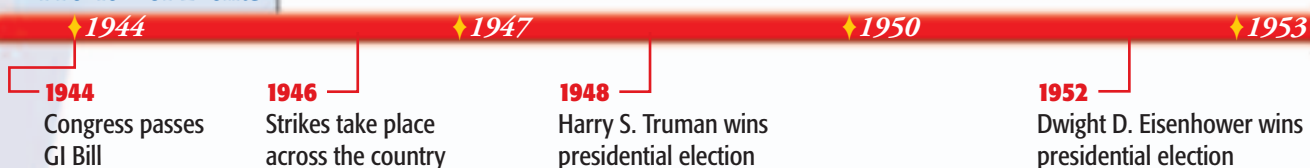
Connection

In the previous chapter, you learned about the beginning of the Cold War. In this section, you will discover how transitioning to a peacetime economy after World War II changed the nation.

Main Idea

- Despite inflation and labor strikes, the United States successfully transitioned to a peacetime economy. (p. 667)
- Throughout his administration, President Truman had an uneasy working relationship with Congress. (p. 668)
- Eisenhower considered his political beliefs middle of the road and tried to balance activism and economic conservatism. (p. 670)

Preview of Events



Content Vocabulary

closed shop, right-to-work law, union shop, featherbedding, dynamic conservatism

Academic Vocabulary

restrain, subsidy, transition

Terms to Identify

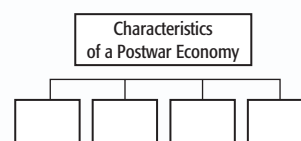
GI Bill, "Do-Nothing Congress," Fair Deal, Federal Highway Act

Reading Objectives

- **Explain** the Truman administration's efforts on the domestic front.
- **Describe** President Eisenhower's domestic agenda.

Reading Strategy

Categorizing As you read about the Truman and Eisenhower administrations, complete a graphic organizer similar to the one below by listing the characteristics of the postwar economy of the United States.



The following are the main History–Social Science Standards covered in this section.

11.8.3 Examine Truman's labor policy and congressional reaction to it.

11.8.4 Analyze new federal government spending on defense, welfare, interest on the national debt, and federal and state spending on education, including the California Master Plan.

11.10.1 Explain how demands of African Americans helped produce a stimulus for civil rights, including President Roosevelt's ban on racial discrimination in defense industries in 1941, and how African Americans' service in World War II produced a stimulus for President Truman's decision to end segregation in the armed forces in 1948.

11.11.2 Discuss the significant domestic policy speeches of Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, Carter, Reagan, Bush, and Clinton (e.g., with regard to education, civil rights, economic policy, environmental policy).

The Big Idea

The fate of nations is forever changed by monumental world events.

Labor strikes for better wages led the new conservative Congress to pass legislation limiting the power of unions. Many of Truman's legislative proposals were defeated in Congress. With backing from laborers, African Americans, and farmers, Truman was able to win reelection in 1948. Congress eventually passed several of Truman's Fair Deal proposals. After winning the election of 1952, President Dwight Eisenhower worked to balance activism and economic conservatism.

Return to a Peacetime Economy

Main Idea Despite inflation and labor strikes, the United States successfully transitioned to a peacetime economy.

Reading Connection Would you consider going on strike to obtain certain rights and privileges? Read on to learn how Truman dealt with mining and railroad strikers.

After the war, many Americans feared the return to a peacetime economy. They worried that after military production halted and millions of former soldiers glutted the labor market, unemployment and recession might sweep the country. Despite such worries, the economy continued to grow. Consumer spending, which had been limited during the war, helped ward off a recession.

★ An American Story ★

As World War II ended, Robert Eubanks was worried as he prepared for his discharge from the army. He had joined the army because, as an African American, it was hard for him to find a job that paid well. Then he heard about something known as the GI Bill, a government program that paid veterans' tuition for college and provided a living allowance. Eubanks took advantage of the program and enrolled at the Illinois Institute of Technology. He earned three degrees on the GI Bill and eventually became a professor at the University of Illinois.

Years later Eubanks recalled how his life was changed by the bill. "It's very hard to explain how things were during the 1940s," he said. "The restrictions on blacks then were rough. The GI Bill gave me my start on being a professional instead of a stock clerk."

—adapted from *When Dreams Came True*

The Servicemen's Readjustment Act, popularly called the **GI Bill**, further boosted the economy. The act provided generous loans to veterans to help them establish businesses, buy homes, and attend college.

Inflation and Strikes The postwar economy was not without its problems. A greater demand for goods led to higher prices, and this rising inflation soon triggered labor unrest. As the cost of living rose, workers across the country went on strike for better pay. Work stoppages soon affected the automobile, electrical, steel, and mining industries.

Afraid that the nation's energy supply would be drastically reduced, President Truman forced striking miners to return to work. Truman ordered government seizure of the mines while pressuring mine owners to grant the union most of its demands. The president also halted a strike that shut down the nation's railroads by threatening to draft the striking workers into the army.

Republican Victory Labor unrest and high prices prompted many Americans to call for a change. The Republicans seized upon these sentiments during the 1946 congressional elections, winning control of both houses of Congress for the first time since 1930.

The new conservative Congress quickly set out to curb the power of organized labor. Legislators proposed a measure known as the Taft-Hartley Act, which outlawed the **closed shop**, or the practice of forcing business owners to hire only union members. Under the law, states could pass **right-to-work laws**, which outlawed **union shops** (shops in which new workers were required to join the union). The measure also prohibited **featherbedding**, the practice of limiting work output in order to create more jobs. When the bill reached Truman he vetoed it, arguing:

“... [It would] reverse the basic direction of our national labor policy, inject the government into private economic affairs on an unprecedented scale, and conflict with important principles of our democratic society. Its provisions would cause more strikes, not fewer.”

—quoted in *The Growth of the American Republic*

The GI Bill African American soldiers review the benefits of the GI Bill, which included loans to attend college and to buy homes.





Picturing History

African Americans Rally for Truman During the 1948 election, President Truman spoke at many rallies similar to this one in New York City. [What legislative proposals by President Truman built African American political support?](#)

The president's concerns, however, did little to sway Congress, which passed the Taft-Hartley Act in 1947 despite President Truman's veto. Its supporters claimed the law held irresponsible unions in check just as the Wagner Act of 1935 had **restrained** antiunion activities and employers. Labor leaders called the act a "slave labor" law and insisted that it erased many of the gains that unions had made since 1933.

 **Reading Check** **Explaining** Why did Truman veto the Taft-Hartley Act?

Truman's Domestic Program

Main Idea Throughout his administration, President Truman had an uneasy working relationship with Congress.

Reading Connection Why is it important that Congress and the president work together in crafting legislation? Read on to discover the relationship between Truman and federal legislators.

The Democratic Party's loss of members in the 1946 elections did not dampen President Truman's spirits or his plans. Shortly after taking office, Truman had proposed a series of domestic measures that sought to continue the work done as part of

Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal. During his tenure in office, Truman worked to push this agenda through Congress.

Truman's Legislative Agenda To continue the efforts of the New Deal, Truman proposed several legislative measures. The president's proposals included the expansion of Social Security benefits; the raising of the legal minimum wage from 40¢ to 75¢ an hour; a program to ensure full employment through aggressive use of federal spending and investment; public housing and slum clearance; long-range environmental and public works planning; and a system of national health insurance.

Truman also boldly asked Congress in February 1948 to pass a broad civil rights bill that would protect African Americans' right to vote, abolish poll taxes, and make lynching a federal crime. He also issued an executive order barring discrimination in federal employment, and he ended segregation in the armed forces.

Most of Truman's legislative efforts, however, met with little success in Congress. A coalition of Republicans and conservative Southern Democrats defeated many of his proposals. While these defeats angered Truman, with the upcoming election of 1948 the president soon had to worry about other matters.

The Election of 1948 As the presidential election of 1948 approached, most observers gave Truman little chance of winning. Some Americans still believed that he lacked the stature for the job, and they viewed his administration as weak and inept.

Divisions within the Democratic Party also seemed to spell disaster for Truman. At the Democratic Convention that summer, two factions abandoned the party altogether. Reacting angrily to Truman's support of civil rights, a group of Southern Democrats walked out of the Democratic Convention. They formed the States' Rights, or Dixiecrat, Party and nominated South Carolina governor Strom Thurmond as their presidential candidate. At the same time, the party's more liberal members were frustrated by Truman's ineffective domestic policies and critical of his anti-Soviet foreign policy. They formed a new Progressive Party, with Henry A. Wallace as their presidential candidate.

The president's Republican opponent was New York governor Thomas Dewey, a dignified and popular candidate who seemed unbeatable. After polling 50 political writers, *Newsweek* magazine declared three weeks before the election, "The landslide for Dewey will sweep the country."

Perhaps the only one who gave Truman a chance to win was Truman himself. "I know every one of those 50 fellows," he declared about the writers polled in *Newsweek*. "There isn't one of them has enough sense to pound sand in a rat hole." Ignoring the polls, the feisty president poured his efforts into an energetic campaign. He traveled more than 20,000 miles by train and made more than 350 speeches. Along the way, Truman attacked the majority Republican Congress as "do-nothing, good-for-nothing" for refusing to enact his legislative agenda.

Truman's attacks on the "**Do-Nothing Congress**" did not mention that both he and Congress had been very busy dealing with foreign policy matters. Congress had passed the Truman Doctrine's aid program to Greece and Turkey, as well as the Marshall Plan. It had also created the Department of Defense and the CIA and established the Joint Chiefs of Staff as a permanent organization. The 80th Congress, therefore, did not "do nothing" as Truman charged, but its accomplishments were in areas that did not affect most Americans directly. As a result, Truman's charges began to stick, and to the surprise of almost everyone, his efforts paid off.

With a great deal of support from laborers, African Americans, and farmers, Truman won a

narrow but stunning victory over Dewey. Perhaps just as remarkable as the president's victory was the resurgence of the Democratic Party. When the dust had cleared after Election Day, Democrats had regained control of both houses of Congress.

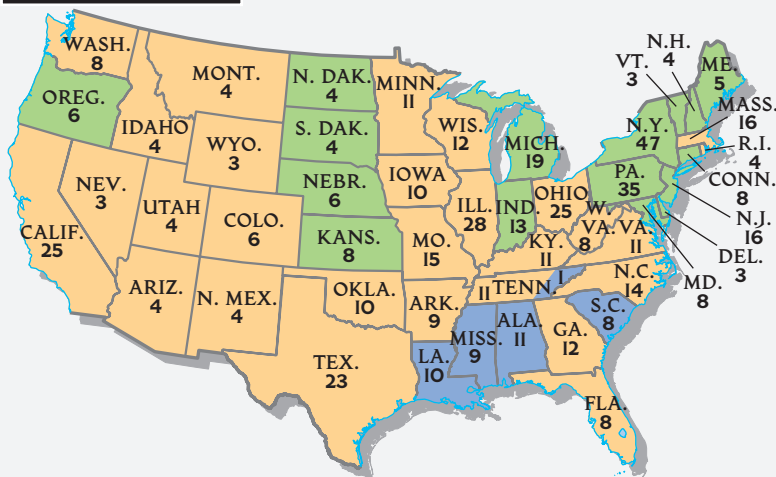
The Fair Deal Truman's State of the Union message to the new Congress repeated the domestic agenda he had put forth previously. "Every segment of our population and every individual," he declared, "has a right to expect from . . . government a fair deal." Whether intentional or not, the president had coined a name—the **Fair Deal**—to set his program apart from the New Deal.

The 81st Congress did not completely embrace Truman's Fair Deal. Legislators did raise the legal minimum wage to 75¢ an hour. They also approved an important expansion of the Social Security system, increasing benefits by 77 percent and extending them to 10 million additional people. Congress also

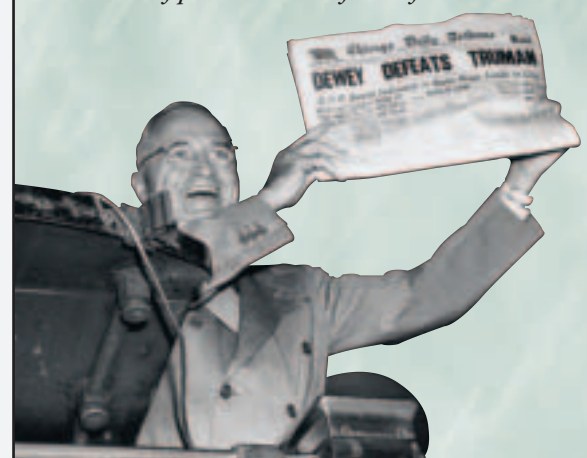
HISTORY Online
Student Web Activity Visit the *American Vision: Modern Times* Web site at tav.mt.glencoe.com and click on **Student Web Activities—Chapter 14** for an activity on postwar America.

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

The Election of 1948



A victorious Truman holds a paper that incorrectly predicted a Dewey victory.



Presidential Election, 1948			
Candidate	Electoral Vote	Popular Vote	Political Party
Truman	303	24,179,345	Democrat
Dewey	189	21,991,291	Republican
Thurmond	39	1,176,125	States' Rights
Wallace	0	1,157,326	Progressive



Geography Skills

- Interpreting Maps** How many electoral votes did President Truman receive?
- Applying Geography Skills** Where did Strom Thurmond enjoy strong political support?



▲ *President Eisenhower waves to a crowd during his election campaign*

passed the National Housing Act of 1949, which provided for the construction of over 800,000 units of low-income housing and long-term rent **subsidies**.

Congress refused, however, to pass national health insurance or to provide subsidies for farmers or federal aid for schools. In addition, legislators opposed Truman's efforts to enact civil rights legislation.

 **Reading Check** **Describing** What was the impact of the election of 1948?

The Eisenhower Years

Main Idea Eisenhower considered his political beliefs middle of the road and tried to balance activism and economic conservatism.

Reading Connection Would a candidate running on a "middle of the road" platform appeal to you as a voter? Read on to learn about Eisenhower's accomplishments as president.

In 1950 the United States went to war in Korea. The war consumed the nation's attention and resources and basically ended Truman's Fair Deal. By 1952, with the war a bloody stalemate and his approval rating dropping quickly, Truman declined to run again for the presidency. With no Democratic incumbent to face, Republicans pinned their hopes of regaining the White House on a popular World War II hero.

The Election of 1952 Dwight Eisenhower decided to run as the Republican nominee for president in 1952. His running mate was a young California senator, Richard Nixon. The Democrats nominated

Illinois governor Adlai Stevenson, a witty and eloquent speaker who had the support of leading liberals and organized labor.

The Republicans adopted the slogan: "It's time for a change!" The warm and friendly Eisenhower, known as "Ike," promised to end the war in Korea. "I like Ike" became the Republican rallying cry.

Eisenhower's campaign soon came under fire as reports surfaced that Richard Nixon had received gifts from California business leaders totaling \$18,000 while he was a senator. For a while, it looked as if Nixon might be dropped from the ticket. In a nationwide speech broadcast on radio and television, Nixon insisted the funds had been used for legitimate political purposes. He did admit that his family had kept one gift, a cocker spaniel puppy named "Checkers." He declared, "The kids love the dog, [and] regardless about what they say about it, we're going to keep it." This so-called "Checkers speech" won praise from much of the public and kept Nixon on the ticket.

Eisenhower won the election by a landslide, carrying the Electoral College 442 votes to 89. The Republicans also gained an eight-seat majority in the House, while the Senate became evenly divided between Democrats and Republicans.

Ike as President President Eisenhower had two favorite phrases. "Middle of the road" described his political beliefs, which fell midway between conservative and liberal. He also referred to the notion of **"dynamic conservatism,"** which meant balancing economic conservatism with some activism.

Eisenhower wasted little time in showing his conservative side. The new president's cabinet appointments included several business leaders. Under their

guidance, Eisenhower ended government price and rent controls, which many conservatives had viewed as unnecessary federal control over the business community. The Eisenhower administration viewed business growth as vital to the nation. The president's secretary of defense, formerly the president of General Motors, declared to the Senate that "what is good for our country is good for General Motors, and vice versa."

Eisenhower's conservatism showed itself in other ways as well. In an attempt to curb the federal budget, the president vetoed a school construction bill and agreed to slash government aid to public housing. Along with these cuts, he supported some modest tax reductions.

Eisenhower also targeted the federal government's continuing aid to businesses, or what he termed "creeping socialism." Shortly after taking office, the president abolished the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC), which since 1932 had lent money to banks, railroads, and other large institutions in financial trouble. Another Depression-era agency, the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), also came under Eisenhower's economic scrutiny. During his presidency, appropriations for the TVA fell from \$185 million to \$12 million.

In some areas, President Eisenhower took an activist role. For example, he advocated the passage of two large government projects. During the 1950s, as the number of Americans who owned cars increased, so too did the need for greater and more efficient travel routes. In 1956 Congress responded to this growing need by passing the **Federal Highway Act**, the largest public works program in American history. The act appropriated \$25 billion for a 10-year effort to construct more than 40,000 miles (64,400 km)

of interstate highways. Congress also authorized construction of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway to connect the Great Lakes with the Atlantic Ocean through a series of locks on the St. Lawrence River. Three previous presidents had been unable to reach agreements with Canada to build this waterway to aid international shipping. Through Eisenhower's efforts, the two nations finally agreed on a plan to complete the project.

Extending the New Deal Although President Eisenhower cut federal spending and worked to limit the federal government's role in the nation's economy, he also agreed to extend the Social Security system to an additional 10 million people. He also extended unemployment compensation to an additional 4 million citizens and agreed to increase the minimum hourly wage from 75¢ to \$1 and to continue to provide some government aid to farmers.

By the time Eisenhower ran for a second term in 1956—a race he won easily—the nation had successfully completed the **transition** from a wartime to a peacetime economy. The battles between liberals and conservatives over whether to continue New Deal policies would continue. In the meantime, however, most Americans focused their energy on enjoying what had become a decade of tremendous prosperity.

 **Reading Check** **Evaluating** What conservative and activist measures did Eisenhower take during his administration?

HISTORY
Online  **Study Central**

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SECTION 1 ASSESSMENT

Checking for Understanding

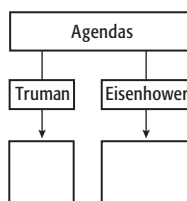
- Vocabulary** Define: closed shop, right-to-work law, union shop, featherbedding, restrain, subsidy, dynamic conservatism, transition.
- People and Terms** Identify: GI Bill, "Do-Nothing Congress," Fair Deal, Federal Highway Act.

Reviewing Big Ideas

- Examining** What programs did Congress pass from Truman's Fair Deal? What programs did Congress refuse?

Critical Thinking

- Historical Analysis** **Interpreting** In what ways did the Taft-Hartley Act hurt labor unions? **CA HI1; HI2**
- Categorizing** Use a graphic organizer to compare the agendas of the Truman and Eisenhower administrations.



Analyzing Visuals

- Analyzing Maps** Study the map on page 669. Which parts of the country did Dewey win? Why do you think he did so well in these areas?

Writing About History

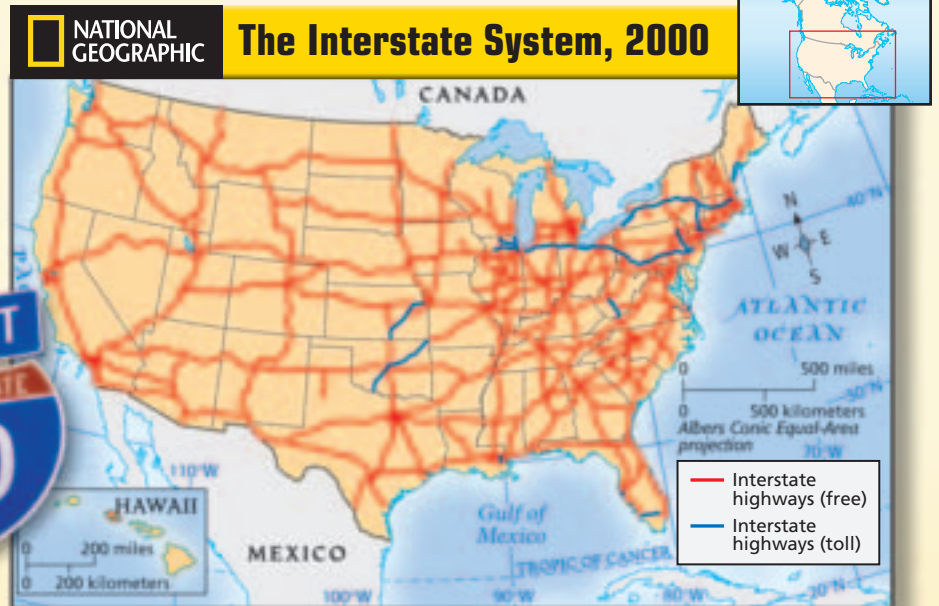
- Persuasive Writing** Take on the role of a member of Congress during the Truman administration. Write a speech in which you try to persuade the 81st Congress to either pass or defeat Truman's Fair Deal measures.

CA 11WS1.1; 11WA2.3b

Why It Matters

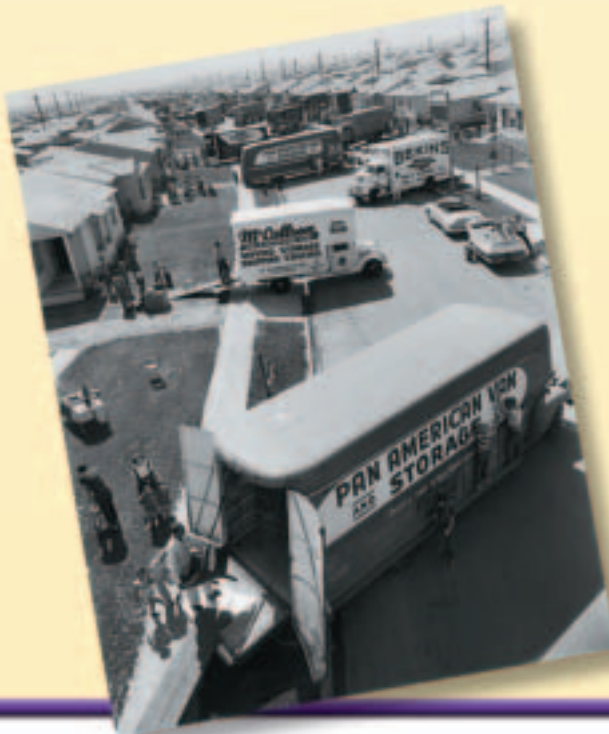
Interstate Highways

As Cold War tensions rose, American officials realized that the ability to move troops and military equipment across the country quickly and efficiently could very well determine whether the nation could survive attack. Since the haphazard system of two-lane highways that crisscrossed America could not handle such a task, the Eisenhower administration proposed a 41,000-mile network of multi-lane interstate highways. The interstate system changed American life in several significant ways.



More Efficient Distribution of Goods ➤

The interstates made the distribution of goods faster and more efficient. In the 1990s, trucks moved more than 6 billion tons of goods each year, nearly half of all commercial transports in the United States. Most of these trucks used interstates.



◀ Suburbanization and Urban Sprawl

The interstate system contributed to the growth of suburban communities and the eventual geographic spread of centerless cities. Using the interstates, suburbanites could commute to their jobs miles away.

A New Road Culture ➤

The interstates created an automobile society. In 1997 \$687 billion were spent on private automobiles compared to \$22.8 billion for public transit. Additionally, chains of fast food restaurants and motels replaced independent operators across the country.



Speed of Travel

The interstate highways drastically decreased the time it took to travel across the continent. In 1919 a young Dwight D. Eisenhower joined 294 other members of the army to travel the 2,800 miles from Washington, D.C., to San Francisco. They made the trip in 62 days, averaging 5 miles per hour. During World War II, General Eisenhower was impressed with the modern design of Germany's freeway system, the Autobahn. "The old convoy," he said, "had started me thinking about good, two-lane highways, but Germany had made me see the wisdom of broader ribbons across the land." Wide lanes and controlled entrance and exit points allowed cars to travel at much higher speeds. Using the interstate highways, Eisenhower's trip would now take $4\frac{1}{2}$ days.

Travel Times: Washington, D.C., to San Francisco



ANALYZING THE IMPACT

Check for Understanding

1. **Identify** How was the initial purpose of the interstate highway system related to the Cold War?

Critical Thinking

2. **Evaluate** Explain the value of the interstate highway system in your area. Is the system an important part or your area's economy and culture?

Guide to Reading

Connection

In the previous section, you learned about the transition of the United States to a peacetime economy. In this section, you will discover the great changes a postwar economic boom brought to American society.

Main Idea

- An increase in service sector and professional jobs led to a great increase in American income from 1940 to 1955. (p. 675)
- Despite a baby boom and cultural pressure, the number of women in the workforce increased. (p. 677)

- Technological changes included the development of early computers, advances in medicine, and new conquests of outer space. (p. 678)

Content Vocabulary

white-collar, blue-collar, multinational corporation, franchise, baby boom

Academic Vocabulary

accompany, benefit, generate

People and Terms to Identify

John Kenneth Galbraith, David Riesman, Levittown, Jonas Salk

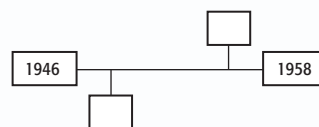
Reading Objectives

- **Explain** the reasons for and the effects of the nation's economic boom.

- **Describe** changes to the American family that took place during the 1950s.
- **Discuss** the technological and medical discoveries of the 1950s.

Reading Strategy

Sequencing As you read about American society in the 1950s, complete a time line similar to the one below by recording the scientific and technological breakthroughs of the time.



Preview of Events

♦ 1946

1947

Construction of Levittown begins

♦ 1950

1950

David Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd* published

♦ 1954

1955

Salk polio vaccine becomes widely available

♦ 1958

1958

John Kenneth Galbraith's *The Affluent Society* published

The following are the main History–Social Science Standards covered in this section.

11.8.1 Trace the growth of service sector, white collar, and professional sector jobs in business and government.

11.8.7 Describe the effects on society and the economy of technological developments since 1945, including the computer revolution, changes in communication, advances in medicine, and improvements in agricultural technology.

11.10.7 Analyze the women's rights movement from the era of Elizabeth Stanton and Susan Anthony and the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment to the movement launched in the 1960s, including differing perspectives on the roles of women.

11.11.3 Describe the changing roles of women in society as reflected in the entry of more women into the labor force and the changing family structure.

Societies change over time. Between 1940 and 1955, the income of American workers increased as the number of white-collar jobs grew. People began to purchase more luxury items and buy homes in the suburbs. During this time, the country also experienced a baby boom. Despite an emphasis on women's roles as homemakers, the number of women in the workplace increased. Advances in technology and medicine brought about the development of early computers, new medicines, and the world's first space satellite.

11.11.7 Explain how the federal, state, and local governments have responded to demographic and social changes such as population shifts to the suburbs, racial

concentrations in the cities, Frostbelt-to-Sunbelt migration, international migration, decline of family farms, increases in out-of-wedlock births, and drug abuse.

American Abundance

Main Idea An increase in service sector and professional jobs led to a great increase in American income from 1940 to 1955.

Reading Connection Did you shop or eat at a franchise this week? Read on to find out about the growth of franchises and multinational corporations during the 1950s.

In 1958 economist **John Kenneth Galbraith** published *The Affluent Society*, in which he claimed that the nation's postwar prosperity was a new phenomenon. In the past, Galbraith said, all societies had an "economy of scarcity," meaning that a lack of resources and overpopulation had limited economic productivity. Now, the United States and a few other industrialized nations had created what Galbraith called an "economy of abundance." An abundance of goods and services allowed many people to enjoy a standard of living they never before thought possible. Kemmons Wilson was one example of how the standard of living was changing.

★ An American Story ★

In the summer of 1951, Kemmons Wilson traveled with his family from Memphis, Tennessee, to Washington, D.C. He noticed that some of the motels they stayed in were terrible. Each added a \$2 charge per child to the standard room price, and many were located far from restaurants, forcing travelers back into their cars to search for meals.

Frustrated, Wilson decided to build a motel chain that would provide interstate travelers with comfortable lodgings. They would be located near good family restaurants and allow kids to stay free. Together with a group of investors, Wilson began building the Holiday Inn motel chain. Families loved his motels, and soon Holiday Inns were sprouting up all over the country.

Wilson said he never doubted the success of his endeavor. "I like to think that I'm so . . . normal that anything I like, everybody else is going to like too," he said. "The idea that my instincts are out of line just doesn't occur to me." His prosperity mirrored a growing affluence in the nation. This time of prosperity made the shortages of the Great Depression and World War II a distant memory.

—adapted from *Watching TV: Four Decades of American Television*

Kemmons Wilson's motel chain proved successful largely because the 1950s was a decade of incredible prosperity.

The Spread of Wealth Some critics accused Galbraith of overstating the situation, but the facts and figures seemed to support his theory. Between 1940 and 1960, the average income of American families roughly tripled. Americans in all income brackets—poor, middle-class, and wealthy—experienced this rapid rise in income. The dramatic rise in home ownership also showed that the income of average families had risen significantly. Between 1940 and 1960, the number of Americans owning their own homes rose from about 43 to about 62 percent.

Accompanying the country's economic growth were dramatic changes in work environments. Mechanization in farms and factories meant that fewer farmers and laborers were needed to provide the public with food and goods. As a result, more Americans began working in what are called **white-collar** jobs, such as those in sales and management. In 1956, for the first time, white-collar workers outnumbered **blue-collar** workers, or people who perform physical labor in industry.

Multinationals and Franchises Many white-collar employees worked for large corporations. As these businesses competed with each other, some expanded overseas. These **multinational corporations** located themselves closer to important raw materials and **benefited** from a cheaper labor pool, which made them more competitive.

Kemmons Wilson on magazine cover ▼





Analyzing Political Cartoons

The Organization Man In the 1950s, more and more people worked in white-collar corporate jobs. Some social critics worried that this development emphasized conformity. In what other ways did society encourage people to conform?

The 1950s also witnessed the rise of **franchises**, in which a person owns and runs one or several stores of a chain operation. Because many business leaders believed that consumers valued dependability and familiarity, the owners of chain operations often demanded that their franchises present a uniform look and style.

The Organization Man Like franchise owners, many corporate leaders also expected their employees to conform to company standards. In general, corporations did not desire free-thinking individuals or people who might speak out or criticize the company. Some social observers recognized this phenomenon and disapproved of it. In his 1950 book, *The Lonely Crowd*, sociologist **David Riesman** argued that this conformity was changing people. Formerly, he claimed, people were “inner-directed,” judging themselves on the basis of their own values and the esteem of their families. Now, however, people were becoming “other-directed,” concerning themselves with winning the approval of the corporation or community.

In his 1956 book *The Organization Man*, writer William H. Whyte, Jr., criticized the similarity many business organizations in the United States cultivated in order to keep any individual from dominating. “In group doctrine,” Whyte wrote, “the strong

personality is viewed with overwhelming suspicion,” and the person with ideas is considered “a threat.”

In the 1950s, more and more people worked in white-collar corporate jobs. Some social critics worried that this development emphasized conformity. In what other ways did society encourage people to conform?

The New Consumerism The conformity of the 1950s included people’s desires to own the same new products as their neighbors. With more disposable income, Americans bought more luxury items, such as refrigerators, washing machines, vacuum cleaners, and air conditioners. Americans also bought a variety of labor-saving machines. As *House and Garden* magazine boasted in a 1954 article, coffeemakers, blenders, and lawn trimmers “[replaced] the talents of caretaker, gardener, cook, [and] maid.”

Accompanying the nation’s spending spree was the growth of more sophisticated advertising. Advertising became the fastest-growing industry in the United States, as manufacturers employed new marketing techniques to sell their products. These techniques were carefully planned to whet the consumer’s appetite. The purpose of these advertisers was to influence choices among brands of goods that were essentially the same. According to the elaborate advertising campaigns of the time, a freezer became a promise of plenty, a second car became a symbol of status, and a mouthwash became the key to immediate success.

The Growth of Suburbia Advertisers targeted their ads to consumers who had money to spend. Many of these consumers lived in the nation’s growing suburbs that grew up around cities.

Levittown, New York, was one of the earliest of the new suburbs. The driving force behind this planned residential community was Bill Levitt, who mass-produced hundreds of simple and similar looking homes in a potato field 10 miles east of New York City. Between 1947 and 1951, thousands of families rushed to buy the inexpensive homes, and soon other communities similar to Levittown sprang up throughout the United States.

Suburbs became increasingly popular throughout the 1950s, accounting for about 85 percent of new home construction. The number of suburban dwellers doubled, while the population of cities themselves rose only 10 percent. Reasons for the rapid growth of suburbia varied. Some people wanted to escape the crime and congestion of city neighborhoods. Others viewed life in the suburbs as a move up to a better life for themselves and their children. In contrast to city life, suburbia offered a more

picturesque environment. As developers in earlier periods had done, the developers of the 1950s attracted home buyers with promises of fresh air, green lawns, and trees.

Affordability became a key factor in attracting home buyers to the suburbs. Because the GI Bill offered low-interest loans, new housing was more affordable during the postwar period than at any other time in American history. Equally attractive was the government's offer of income tax deductions for home mortgage interest payments and property taxes. For millions of Americans, the suburbs came to symbolize the American dream. They owned their homes, sent their children to good schools, lived in safe communities, and enjoyed economic security.

Nevertheless, some social commentators, such as architect Lewis Mumford and writer John Keats, viewed such plain and identical-looking communities as another sign of conformity. "You too can find a box of your own," wrote Keats, "inhabited by people whose age, income, number of children, problems, habits, conversations, dress, possessions, perhaps even blood types are almost precisely like yours."

Reading Check **Interpreting** What were two causes and effects of the economic boom of the 1950s?

The 1950s Family

Main Idea Despite a baby boom and cultural pressure, the number of women in the workforce increased.

Reading Connection Do most of the women you know work outside the home? Read on to learn about the number of women who held jobs and raised families in the 1950s.

In addition to all the other transformations taking place in the nation during the 1950s, the American family also was changing. Across the country, many families grew larger, and more married women entered the workforce.

The Baby Boom The American birthrate exploded after World War II. From 1945 to 1961, a period known as the **baby boom**, more than 65 million children were born in the United States. At the height of the baby boom, a child was born every seven seconds.

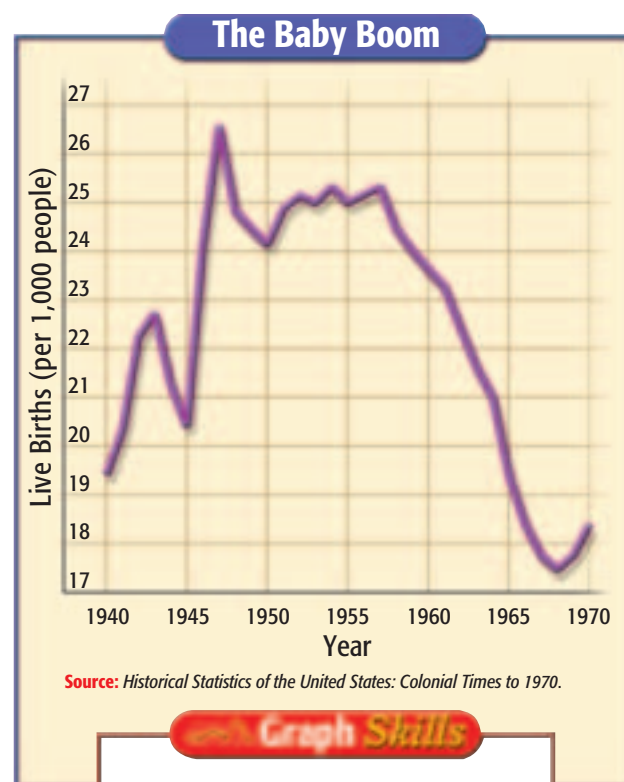
Several factors contributed to the baby boom. First, young couples who had delayed marriage during World War II and the Korean War could now marry, buy homes, and begin their families. In addition, the government encouraged the growth of fami-

lies by offering generous GI benefits for home purchases. Finally, on television and in magazines, popular culture celebrated pregnancy, parenthood, and large families.

Women in the Fifties Many women focused on their traditional role of homemaker during the 1950s. Even though 8 million American women had gone to work during the war, the new postwar emphasis on having babies and establishing families now discouraged women from seeking employment. Many Americans assumed that a good mother should stay home to take care of her children.

"Let's face it, girls," declared one female writer in *Better Homes and Gardens* in April 1955, "that wonderful guy in your house—and in mine—is building your house, your happiness and the opportunities that will come to your children." The magazine advised stay-at-home wives to "set their sights on a happy home, a host of friends and a bright future through success in HIS job."

Despite the popular emphasis on homemaking, however, the number of women who held jobs



- Graph Skills**
- Interpreting Graphs** When did the rapid rise in population shown here reach its peak?
 - Analyzing Cause and Effect** What factors contributed to this rapid rise in births?

Profiles IN HISTORY

Dr. Jonas Salk

1914–1995



The man who developed the vaccine for one of the nation's most feared diseases almost did not go into medicine. Jonas Salk enrolled in college as a pre-law student but soon changed his mind. "My mother didn't think I would make a very good lawyer," Salk said, "probably because I could never win an argument with her." Salk switched his major to pre-med and went on to become a research scientist.

Salk initially directed the search for a cure to the dreaded ailment of polio at the University of Pittsburgh's Virus Research Laboratory. Every so often, Salk would make rounds in the over-

crowded polio wards of nearby Municipal Hospital, where nurses described their feelings of pity and helpless rage as paralyzed children cried for water. As one nurse said, "I can remember how the staff used to kid Dr. Salk—kidding in earnest—telling him to hurry up and do something."

Salk became famous for his breakthrough vaccine. The shy doctor, however, did not desire fame. About his becoming a celebrity, Salk observed that it was "a transitory thing and you wait till it blows over. Eventually people will start thinking, 'That poor guy,' and leave me alone. Then I'll be able to get back to my laboratory."

outside the home actually increased during the 1950s. Most women who went to work did so in order to help their families maintain their comfortable lifestyles. By 1960 nearly one-third of all married women were part of the paid workforce.

 **Reading Check** **Evaluating** What were three factors that contributed to the baby boom?

Technological Breakthroughs

Main Idea Technological changes included the development of early computers, advances in medicine, and new conquests of outer space.

Reading Connection What recent advances have been made in the study of outer space? Read on to discover the early satellite launch from Cape Canaveral.

As the United States underwent many social changes during the postwar era, the nation also witnessed several important scientific advances. In medicine, space exploration, and electronics, American scientists broke new ground during the 1950s.

Advances in Electronics The electronics industry made rapid advances after World War II. In 1947 three American physicists—John Bardeen, Walter H. Brattain, and William Shockley—developed the transistor, a tiny device that **generated** electric signals and made it possible to miniaturize radios and calculators.

The age of computers also dawned in the postwar era. In 1946 scientists working under a U.S. Army contract developed one of the nation's earliest computers—known as ENIAC (Electronic Numerical Integrator and Computer)—to make military calculations. Several years later, a newer model called UNIVAC (Universal Automatic Computer) would handle business data and launch the computer revolution. The computer, along with changes and improvements in communication and transportation systems, allowed many Americans to work more quickly and efficiently. As a result, families in the 1950s had more free time, and new forms of leisure activity became popular.

Medical Miracles The medical breakthroughs of the 1950s included the development of powerful antibiotics to fight infection; the introduction of new drugs to combat arthritis, diabetes, cancer, and heart disease; and groundbreaking advances in surgical techniques. Polio, however, continued to baffle the medical profession.

Periodic polio epidemics had been occurring in the United States since 1916. Franklin Roosevelt contracted the disease as a young man and used a wheelchair for the remainder of his life. In the 1940s and 1950s, however, polio struck the nation in epidemic proportions. Officially known as infantile paralysis because it generally targeted the young, the disease brought a wave of terror to the country. No one knew where or when polio would strike, but an epidemic broke out in some area of the country each summer, sometimes paralyzing or killing its victims. People

watched helplessly while neighbors fell sick. Some died or needed an iron lung as part of their treatment. Iron lungs were large metal tanks with pumps that helped patients breathe.

Because no one knew what caused the disease, parents searched for ways to safeguard their families each summer. Some sent their children to the country to avoid excessive contact with others. Public swimming pools and beaches were closed. Parks and playgrounds across the country stood deserted. Nevertheless, the disease continued to strike. In 1952 a record 58,000 new cases were reported.

Finally, a research scientist named **Jonas Salk** developed an injectable vaccine that prevented polio. Salk first tested the vaccine on himself, his wife, and his three sons. It was then tested on 2 million school-children. In 1955 the vaccine was declared safe and effective and became available to the general public. The results were spectacular. New cases of polio fell to 5,700 in 1958 and then to 3,277 in 1960. American scientist Albert Sabin then developed an oral vaccine for polio. Because it was safer and more convenient than Salk's injection vaccine, the Sabin vaccine became the most common form of treatment against the disease. In the years to come, the threat of polio in the United States would almost completely disappear.

Conquering Space After the Soviet Union launched *Sputnik*, the world's first space satellite, in October 1957, the United States hastened to catch up with its Cold War rival. Less than four months later, on January 31, 1958, the United States launched its own satellite from Cape Canaveral, Florida. Reporter Milton Bracker described the jubilant scene:

“As the firing command neared, a deadly silence fell on those who were watching. In the glare of the searchlights, a stream of liquid oxygen could be seen venting like a lavender cloud from the side of the seventy-foot rocket. . . . At fourteen and one-half seconds after time zero, after the priming fuel had ignited almost invisibly, the main stage engine came to life with an immeasurable thrust of flame in all directions. . . . With thousands of eyes following it, the rocket dug into the night and accelerated as its sound loudened. Spectators on near-by beaches pointed and craned their necks and cried, ‘There it is!’ and began to cheer.”

—quoted in *Voices from America's Past*

Meanwhile, engineers were building smoother and faster commercial planes. Poet Carl Sandburg wrote about taking the first American jet flight from New York to Los Angeles. The trip took only five and a half hours. “You search for words to describe the speed of this flight,” wrote an amazed Sandburg. “You are whisked . . . from an ocean on one side of the continent to an ocean on the opposite side in less time than it takes the sun to trace a 90-degree arc across the sky.”

Reading Check **Examining** What medical and technological advances met specific needs in the late 1940s and 1950s?

HISTORY
Online



Study Central

For help with the concepts in this section of *American Vision: Modern Times* go to tav.mt.glencoe.com and click on **Study Central**.

SECTION 2 ASSESSMENT

Checking for Understanding

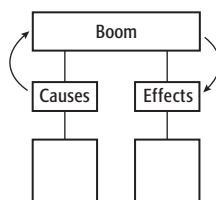
- Vocabulary** Define: accompany, white-collar, blue-collar, multinational corporation, benefit, franchise, baby boom, generate.
- People and Terms** Identify: John Kenneth Galbraith, David Riesman, Levittown, Jonas Salk.
- Describe** how and why the suburbs became popular places to live.

Reviewing Big Ideas

- Explaining** How was the affluent society of the United States in the 1950s different from previous decades?

Critical Thinking

- Historical Analysis** **Interpreting** What caused the advertising industry boom in the 1950s? **CA HIT**
- Organizing** Use a graphic organizer similar to the one below to list the causes and effects of the economic boom of the 1950s.



Analyzing Visuals

- Analyzing Photographs** Study the photograph of Kemmons Wilson on the cover of TIME magazine on page 675. Using the information in this section, who or what would you put on the cover of a magazine if you were the editor? Sketch your cover on a sheet of paper.

Writing About History

- Descriptive Writing** Write an article for a magazine such as *Better Homes and Gardens* describing changes the American family underwent during the 1950s. **CA 11WA2.3c**

Popular Culture of the 1950s

Guide to Reading

Connection

In the previous section, you learned about the changes an economic boom brought to American society. In this section, you will discover how Americans entertained themselves in the 1950s.

Main Idea

- Technological enhancements increased the popularity of television and movies. (p. 681)
- Rock 'n' roll music and the literature of the beat movement defined youth culture. (p. 683)

- Although few African Americans performed on television, many had a profound impact on early rock 'n' roll. (p. 685)

Content Vocabulary

generation gap

Academic Vocabulary

device, controversial

People to Identify

Ed Sullivan, Alan Freed, Elvis Presley, Jack Kerouac, Nat King Cole

Reading Objectives

- **Explain** the characteristics of the new youth culture.

- **Discuss** the contributions of African Americans to 1950s culture.

Reading Strategy

Categorizing As you read about the popular culture of the 1950s, complete a graphic organizer similar to the one below comparing new forms of mass media during the 1950s.

New Forms of Mass Media	Description

Preview of Events

1955	1956	1957	1958
The quiz show <i>The \$64,000 Question</i> debuts	Elvis Presley appears on the <i>Ed Sullivan Show</i> ; Allen Ginsberg's "Howl" published	40 million television sets in use in the United States	TV quiz show scandals begin to surface

The following are the main History–Social Science Standards covered in this section.

11.8.8 Discuss forms of popular culture, with emphasis on their origins and geographic diffusion (e.g., jazz and other forms of popular music, professional sports, architectural and artistic styles).

The Big Idea

Societies change over time. With more money and time available, Americans bought more televisions. Comedies, action and adventure shows, variety programs, and game shows captivated viewers. Hollywood tried to regain audiences with 3-D films and new panoramic screens. A new youth culture that developed during this time embraced rock 'n' roll and the literature of the beat movement. While few African Americans were able to perform on television, many still had a profound impact on rock 'n' roll.

The New Mass Media

Main Idea Technological enhancements increased the popularity of television and movies.

Reading Connection What television shows do you like to watch? Read on to learn about the early television shows and stars.

Although regular television broadcasts had begun in the early 1940s, there were few stations, and sets were expensive. By the end of the 1950s, however, the small, black-and-white-screened sets sat in living rooms across the country. One of the shows of the time that captivated audiences was *I Love Lucy*.

★ *An American Story* ★

In 1953 Lucille Ball and her real-life husband, Desi Arnaz, were starring in one of the most popular shows on American television, *I Love Lucy*. In January, Ball had a baby—both in real life and on her show. Her pregnancy and the birth of her baby became a national event that captivated her audience. A pre-filmed segment of the show showed Lucy and her husband going to the hospital to have the baby, and the show was broadcast only a few hours after the real birth. More than two-thirds of the nation's television sets tuned in, an audience of around 44 million viewers. Far fewer people watched the next day when television broadcast a presidential inauguration.

I Love Lucy was so popular that some people actually set up their work schedules around the show. Marshall Field's, which had previously held sales on the same night the show was on, eventually switched its sales to a different night. A sign on its shop window explained, "We love Lucy too, so we're closing on Monday nights." A relatively new medium, television had swept the nation by the mid-1950s.

—adapted from *Watching TV: Four Decades of American Television*

Television's popularity forced the other forms of mass media—namely motion pictures and radio—to innovate in order to keep their audiences.

The Rise of Television Popularity During World War II, televisions became more affordable for consumers. In 1946 it is estimated there were between 7,000 and 8,000 sets in the entire United States. By

1957 there were 40 million television sets in use. Over 80 percent of households had televisions.

By the late 1950s, television news had become an important vehicle for information. Television advertising spawned a growing market for many new products. Advertising, after all, provided television with the money that allowed it to flourish. As one critic concluded, "Programs on television are simply a **device** to keep the advertisements and commercials from bumping loudly together." Televised athletic events gradually made professional and college sports one of the most prominent sources of entertainment.

Comedy, Action, and Games Early television programs fell into several main categories including comedy, action and adventure, and variety-style entertainment. Laughter proved popular in other formats besides the half-hour situation comedy. Many of the early television comedy shows, such as those starring Bob Hope and Jack Benny, were adapted from popular old radio shows. Benny enjoyed considerable television success with his routines of bad violin playing and stingy behavior.

Television watchers in the 1950s also relished action shows. Westerns such as *Hopalong Cassidy*, *The Lone Ranger*, and *Gunsmoke* grew quickly in popularity. Viewers also enjoyed police programs such as *Dragnet*, a hugely successful show featuring Joe Friday and his partner hunting down a new criminal each week.

▼ *Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz*



PhotoFest

CONTENTS

Variety shows such as **Ed Sullivan's** *Toast of the Town* provided a mix of comedy, opera, popular song, dance, acrobatics, and juggling. Quiz shows attracted large audiences, too, after the 1955 debut of *The \$64,000 Question*. In this show and its many imitators, two contestants tried to answer questions from separate glass-encased booths. The questions, stored between shows in a bank vault, arrived at the studio at airtime in the hands of a stern faced bank executive flanked by two armed guards. The contestants competed head-to-head, with the winner returning the following week to face a new challenger.

In 1956 the quiz show *Twenty-One* caused an uproar across the nation after Charles Van Doren, a young assistant professor with a modest income, won \$129,000 during his weeks on the program. The viewing public soon learned, however, that Van Doren and many of the other contestants had received the answers to the questions in advance. Before a congressional committee in 1959, Van Doren admitted his role in the scandal and apologized to his many fans, saying, "I was involved, deeply involved, in a deception." In the wake of the *Twenty-One* fraud, many quiz shows went off the air.

Hollywood Adapts to the Times As the popularity of television grew, movies lost viewers. "Hollywood's like Egypt," lamented producer David Selznick in 1951. "Full of crumbling pyramids." While the film business may not have been collapsing, it certainly did suffer after the war. Attendance dropped from 82 million in 1946 to 36 million by 1950. By 1960, when some 50 million Americans owned a television, one-fifth of the nation's movie theaters had closed.

▼ Charles Van Doren with quiz show host Jack Berry



Throughout the decade, Hollywood struggled mightily to recapture its audience. "Don't be a 'Living Room Captive,'" one industry ad pleaded. "Step out and see a great movie!" When contests, door prizes, and an advertising campaign announcing that "Movies Are Better Than Ever" failed to lure people out of their homes, Hollywood began to try to make films more exciting. Between 1952 and 1954, audiences of 3-D films received special glasses that gave the impression that a monster or a knife was lunging directly at them from off the screen. Viewers, however, soon tired of both the glasses and the often ridiculous plots of 3-D movies.

Cinemascope, movies shown on large, panoramic screens, finally gave Hollywood a reliable lure. Wide-screen spectacles like *The Robe*, *The Ten Commandments*, and *Around the World in 80 Days* cost a great deal of money to produce. These blockbusters, however, made up for their cost by attracting huge audiences and netting large profits. The movie industry also made progress by taking the "if you can't beat 'em, join 'em" approach. Hollywood eventually began to film programs especially for television and also sold old movies, which could be rebroadcast cheaply, to the networks.

Like television, the films of the fifties for the most part adhered to the conformity of the times. Roles for single women who did not want families were few and far between. For example, each of Marilyn Monroe's film roles featured the blond movie star as married, soon to be married, or unhappy that she was not married.

Movies routinely portrayed African Americans in stereotypical roles, such as maids, servants, or sidekicks for white heroes. Even when African Americans took leading roles, they were often one-dimensional characters who rarely showed human emotions or characteristics. African American actor Sidney Poitier resented having to play such parts:

“The black characters usually come out on the screen as saints, as the other-cheek-turners, as people who are not really people: who are so nice and good. . . . As a matter of fact, I'm just dying to play villains.”

—quoted in *The Fifties: The Way We Really Were*

Radio Draws Them In Television also lured away radio listeners and forced the radio industry, like Hollywood, to develop new ways to win back audiences. After television took over many of radio's concepts, radio stations began to specialize in

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

MOMENT in HISTORY

THE KING OF ROCK

Elvis Presley, shown here signing autographs after a performance in Houston, took American youth in the 1950s by storm. Parents, on the other hand, were less than thrilled with his music—a blend of African American-inspired rhythm and blues and early rock 'n' roll—and his hip-swiveling gyrations on stage. For Presley's first appearance on *The Ed Sullivan Show*, the host insisted that cameras show him only from the waist up. Elvis added to his fame by starring in a string of films that audiences loved but critics panned.



presenting recorded music, news, public-service programming, and shows for specific audiences.

As a result of this targeted programming, radio stations survived and even flourished. Their numbers more than doubled between 1948, when 1,680 stations were broadcasting to the nation, and 1957, when more than 3,600 stations filled the airwaves.

 **Reading Check** **Identifying** How did the television industry affect the U.S. economy?

The New Youth Culture

Main Idea Rock 'n' roll music and the literature of the beat movement defined youth culture.

Reading Connection How does the music and literature of your generation differ from that of the 1950s? Read on to find out about the beginnings of a unique youth culture.

While Americans of all ages embraced the new mass media, some of the nation's youth rebelled against such a message. During the 1950s, a number

of young Americans turned their backs on the conformist ideals adult society promoted. Although these youths were a small minority, their actions brought them widespread attention. In general, these young people longed for greater excitement and freedom, and they found an outlet for such feelings of restlessness in new and **controversial** styles of music and literature.

Rock 'n' Roll In the early 1950s, rock 'n' roll emerged as the distinctive music of the new generation. In 1951 at a record store in downtown Cleveland, Ohio, radio disc jockey **Alan Freed** noticed white teenagers buying African American rhythm and blues records and dancing to the music in the store. Freed later recalled, "I wondered for about a week. Then I went to the station manager talked him into permitting me to follow my classical program with a rock 'n' roll party." Calling himself "Moondog," Freed aired his first program on July 11, 1951. Just as the disc jockey had suspected, the listeners went crazy for it. Soon, white artists began making music that stemmed from these African American rhythms and sounds, and a new form of music, rock 'n' roll, had been born.

With a loud and heavy beat that made it ideal for dancing along with lyrics about romance, cars, and other themes that spoke to young people, rock 'n' roll grew wildly popular among the nation's teens. Before long boys and girls around the country were rushing out to buy the latest hits from such artists as Buddy Holly, Chuck Berry, and Bill Haley and the Comets. In 1956 teenagers found their first rock 'n' roll hero in **Elvis Presley**. Presley, who had been born in rural Mississippi and grown up poor in Memphis, Tennessee, eventually claimed the title of "King of Rock 'n' Roll."

While in high school, Presley had learned to play guitar and sing by imitating the rhythm and blues music he heard on the radio. By 1956 Elvis had a record deal with RCA Victor, a movie contract, and public appearances on several television shows. At first the popular television variety show host Ed Sullivan refused to invite Presley on, insisting that the rock 'n' roll music was not fit for a family oriented show. When a competing show featuring Presley upset his own high ratings, however, Sullivan relented. He ended up paying Presley \$50,000 per performance for three appearances, more than triple the amount he had paid any other performer.

▼ Jack Kerouac



The dark-haired and handsome Presley owed his wild popularity as much to his moves as to his music. During his performances he would gyrate his hips and dance in other suggestive ways that shocked many in the audience. Presley himself admitted the importance of this part of his act:

“I’m not kidding myself. My voice alone is just an ordinary voice. What people come to see is how I use it. If I stand still while I’m singing, I’m dead, man. I might as well go back to driving a truck.”

—quoted in *God’s Country: America in the Fifties*

Not surprisingly, parents—many of whom listened to Frank Sinatra and other more mellow and mainstream artists—condemned rock 'n' roll as loud, mindless, and dangerous. The city council of San Antonio, Texas, actually banned rock 'n' roll from the jukeboxes at public swimming pools. The music, the council declared, “attracted undesirable elements given to practicing their gyrations in abbreviated bathing suits.” A minister in Boston complained that “rock and roll inflames and excites youth.”

The rock 'n' roll hits that teens bought in record numbers united them in a world their parents did not share. Thus in the 1950s rock 'n' roll helped to create what became known as the **generation gap**, or the cultural separation between children and their parents.

The Beat Movement If rock 'n' roll helped to create a generation gap, a group of mostly white artists who called themselves the beats highlighted a values gap in the 1950s United States. The term *beat* may have come from the feeling among group members of being “beaten down” by American culture, or from jazz musicians who would say, “I’m beat right down to my socks.”

The beats sought to live unconventional lives as fugitives from a culture they despised. Beat poets, writers, and artists harshly criticized what they considered the sterility and conformity of American life, the meaninglessness of American politics, and the emptiness of popular culture.

In 1956, 29-year-old beat poet Allen Ginsberg published a long poem called “Howl,” which blasted modern American life. Another beat member, **Jack Kerouac**, published *On the Road* in 1957. Although Kerouac’s book about his freewheeling adventures with a car thief and con artist shocked some readers, the book went on to become a classic in modern American literature.

✓ **Reading Check** **Summarizing** How did rock 'n' roll help create the generation gap?

African American Entertainers

Main Idea Although few African Americans performed on television, many had a profound impact on early rock 'n' roll.

Reading Connection What African American entertainers currently have shows on television? Read on to discover the discrimination nonwhite performers faced during the 1950s.

While artists such as Jack Kerouac rejected American culture, African American entertainers struggled to find acceptance in a country that often treated them as second-class citizens. With a few notable exceptions, television tended to shut out African Americans. In 1956, NBC gave a popular African American singer named **Nat King Cole** his own 15-minute musical variety show. In 1958, after 64 episodes, NBC canceled the show after failing to secure a national sponsor for a show hosted by an African American.

African American rock 'n' roll singers had more luck gaining acceptance. The talented African American singers and groups who recorded hit songs in the fifties included Chuck Berry, Ray Charles, Little Richard, and the Drifters. The latter years of the 1950s also saw the rise of several African American women's groups, including the Crystals, the Chiffons, the Shirelles, and the Ronettes. With their catchy, popular sound, these groups became the musical ancestors of the famous late 1960s groups Martha and the Vandellas and the Supremes.

Over time, the music of the early rock 'n' roll artists had a profound influence on music through-



Picturing History

African American Entertainers Rhythm and blues music provided the roots of the 1950s rock 'n' roll sound. Did African American rock 'n' roll artists experience the same acceptance as artists like Elvis Presley? Why or why not?

out the world. Little Richard and Chuck Berry, for example, provided inspiration for the Beatles, whose music swept Britain and the world in the 1960s. Elvis's music transformed generations of rock 'n' roll bands that were to follow him and other pioneers of rock. Despite the innovations in music and the economic boom of the 1950s, not all Americans were part of the affluent society. For much of the country's minorities and rural poor, the American dream remained well out of reach.

Reading Check **Evaluating** What impact did American rock 'n' roll artists have on the rest of the world?

HISTORY
Online



Study Central

For help with the concepts in this section of *American Vision: Modern Times* go to tav.mt.glencoe.com and click on **Study Central**.

SECTION 3 ASSESSMENT

Checking for Understanding

1. **Vocabulary** Define: device, controversial, generation gap.
2. **People and Terms** Identify: Ed Sullivan, Alan Freed, Elvis Presley, Jack Kerouac, Nat King Cole.
3. **Explain** what happened to motion pictures and radio when television became popular.

Reviewing Big Ideas

4. **Describing** What roles did African Americans play in television and rock 'n' roll?

Critical Thinking

5. **Comparing** How did the themes of television shows of the 1950s differ from the themes of the literature of the beat movement?
6. **Organizing** Use a graphic organizer similar to the one below to list the styles of music and literature that made up the new youth culture of the 1950s.



Analyzing Visuals

7. **Analyzing Photographs** Study the photograph on page 682. In the 1950s television game shows were a trend in programming. What new trends exist in television programming today? Do you think television is as popular today as it was in the 1950s? Explain your answer.

Writing About History

8. **Expository Writing** Imagine you are a beat writer in the 1950s. Explain to your readers how the themes you write about are universal themes that could apply to everyone. **CA 11WA2.4a**



Profile

JAMES DEAN had a brief but spectacular career as a film star. His role in *Rebel Without a Cause* made him an icon for American youth in the mid-50s. In 1955 Dean was killed in a car crash. He was 24.

"I guess I have as good an insight into this rising generation as any other young man my age. Therefore, when I do play a youth, I try to imitate life. *Rebel Without a Cause* deals with the problems of modern youth. . . . If you want the kids to come and see the picture, you've got to try to reach them on their own grounds. If a picture is psychologically motivated, if there is truth in the relationships in it, then I think that picture will do good."

—from an interview for *Rebel Without a Cause*

VERBATIM

“It will make a wonderful place for the children to play in, and it will be a good storehouse, too.”

MRS. RUTH CALHOUN,
mother of three, on her backyard
fallout shelter, 1951

“Riddle: What's college? That's where girls who are above cooking and sewing go to meet a man they can spend their lives cooking and sewing for.”

ad for Gimbel's department store
campus clothes, 1952

“Radioactive poisoning of the atmosphere and hence annihilation of any life on Earth has been brought within the range of technical possibilities.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN,
physicist, 1950

“If the television craze continues with the present level of programs, we are destined to have a nation of morons.”

DANIEL MARSH,
President of Boston University, 1950

“Every time the Russians throw an American in jail, the House Un-American Activities Committee throws an American in jail to get even.”

MORT SAHL,
comedian, 1950s

WINNERS & LOSERS



Poodle Cut

POODLE CUTS

Short, curly hairstyle gains wide popularity and acceptance

TV GUIDE

New weekly magazine achieves circulation of 6.5 million by 1959

PALMER PAINT COMPANY OF DETROIT

Sells 12 million paint-by-number kits ranging from simple landscapes and portraits to Leonardo da Vinci's *The Last Supper*

THE DUCKTAIL

Banned in several Massachusetts schools in 1957

COLLIER'S

The respected magazine loses circulation, publishes its final edition on January 4, 1957

LEONARDO DA VINCI'S THE LAST SUPPER

Now everyone can paint their own copy to hang in their homes



The Ducktail

ARCHIVE PHOTOS

SUPERSTOCK

1950s WORD PLAY

Translation, Please!

Match the word to its meaning.

Teen-Age Lingo

- | | |
|---------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. cool | a. a dull person, an outsider |
| 2. hang loose | b. worthy of approval |
| 3. hairy | c. formidable |
| 4. yo-yo | d. don't worry |



ANSWERS: 1. b; 2. d; 3. c; 4. a



BETTMANN/CORBIS

Bomb Shelter

Be Prepared

“Know the Bomb’s True Dangers. Know the Steps You Can Take to Escape Them!—You Can Survive.”

Government pamphlet, 1950

DIGGING YOUR OWN BOMB SHELTER? Better go shopping. Below is a list of items included with the \$3,000 Mark I Kidde Kokoon, designed to accommodate a family of five for a three- to five-day underground stay.

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| ▪ air blower | ▪ chemical toilet | ▪ first aid kit |
| ▪ radiation detector | ▪ toilet chemicals (2 gallons) | ▪ waterless hand cleaner |
| ▪ protective apparel suit | ▪ bunks (5) | ▪ sterno stove |
| ▪ face respirator | ▪ mattresses and blankets (5) | ▪ canned water (10 gallons) |
| ▪ radiation charts (4) | ▪ air pump (for blowing up mattresses) | ▪ canned food (meat, powdered milk, cereal, sugar, etc.) |
| ▪ hand shovel combination (for digging out after the blast) | ▪ incandescent bulbs (2) 40 watts | ▪ paper products |
| ▪ gasoline driven generator | ▪ fuses (2) 5 amperes | |
| ▪ gasoline (10 gallons) | ▪ clock—non-electric | |

NUMBERS 1957

3¢ Cost of first-class postage stamp

19¢ Cost of loaf of bread

25¢ Cost of issue of *Sports Illustrated*

35¢ Cost of movie ticket

50¢ Cost of gallon of milk (delivered)

\$2.05 Average hourly wage

\$2,845 Cost of new car



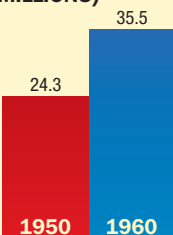
POPPER/TO/ARCHIVE PHOTO

\$5,234 Median income for a family of four

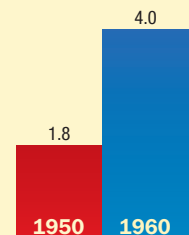
\$19,500 Median price to buy a home

American Scene, 1950–1960

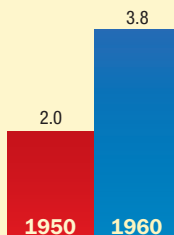
(MILLIONS)



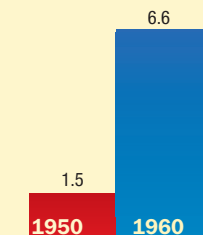
Children 5–14



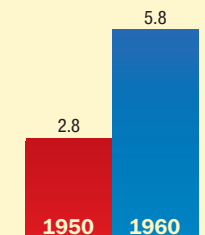
Girl Scouts & Brownies



Bicycle Production



National Forest Campers



Outboard Motors in Use

The Other Side of American Life

Guide to Reading

Connection

In the previous section, you learned about new forms of entertainment. In this section, you will discover how some Americans were left out of the new prosperity.

Main Idea

- Despite the growing affluence of much of the nation, many groups still lived in poverty. (p. 689)
- Concerns about rising juvenile delinquency and failing educational systems surfaced during the late 1950s. (p. 692)

Content Vocabulary

poverty line, urban renewal, termination policy, juvenile delinquency

Academic Vocabulary

abstraction, conformity, technical

People and Terms to Identify

Michael Harrington, Bracero program

Reading Objectives

- **Identify** those groups that found themselves left out of the American economic boom following World War II.
- **Explain** the factors that contributed to the poverty among various groups.

Reading Strategy

Taking Notes As you read about social problems in the United States in the 1950s, use the major headings of the section to create an outline similar to the one below.

The Other Side of American Life
I. Poverty Amidst Prosperity
A.
B.
C.
D.
E.
II.

Preview of Events

1953

1953

Federal government institutes termination policy directed at Native Americans

1956

1955

Rudolf Flesch's *Why Johnny Can't Read* published

1959

1959

A Raisin in the Sun opens on Broadway

1962

1962

Michael Harrington's *The Other America* published

The following are the main History–Social Science Standards covered in this section.

11.8.2 Describe the significance of Mexican immigration and its relationship to the agricultural economy, especially in California.

11.8.4 Analyze new federal government spending on defense, welfare, interest on the national debt, and federal and state spending on education, including the California Master Plan.

11.10.1 Explain how demands of African Americans helped produce a stimulus for civil rights, including President Roosevelt's ban on racial discrimination in defense industries in 1941, and how African Americans' service in World War II produced a stimulus for President Truman's decision to end segregation in the armed forces in 1948.

The Big Idea

Societies change over time. Despite the increasing prosperity in the United States, many minorities and rural whites continued to struggle with poverty. When people and businesses moved from the cities to the suburbs, the inner cities began to decline. Many of the people left behind were African Americans who faced racial discrimination when searching for employment. Hispanics and Native Americans often faced similar problems. During the 1950s, as people left Appalachia to search for better lives in the cities, they left behind the elderly and those who could not travel. The result was extreme poverty, along with poor nutrition and insufficient healthcare, for those who remained. Americans paid more attention to a rise in juvenile delinquency and inadequate educational systems.

Poverty Amidst Prosperity

Main Idea Despite the growing affluence of much of the nation, many groups still lived in poverty.

Reading Connection Are the pockets of poverty in America today the same as they were in the 1950s? Read on to discover groups who were left out of the general economic boom of the 1950s.

The booming 1950s saw a tremendous expansion of the middle class. In 1950, about 1 in 3 Americans were poor. By 1959, only 1 in 5 were poor. Despite these dramatic gains, about 30 million people still lived below the **poverty line**, a figure set by the government to reflect the minimum income required to support a family. Such poverty remained invisible to most Americans, who assumed that the country's general prosperity had provided everyone with a comfortable existence.

★ An American Story ★

In 1959 Lorraine Hansberry's play, *A Raisin in the Sun*, opened on Broadway. The play told the story of a working-class African American family struggling against poverty and racism. The title referred to a Langston Hughes poem that wonders what happens to an unrealized dream: "Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun?" Hansberry's play won the New York Drama Critics Circle Award for the best play of the year. Reflecting later upon the play's theme, she wrote:

“Vulgarity, blind conformity, and mass lethargy need not triumph in the land of Lincoln and Frederick Douglass. . . . There is simply no reason why dreams should dry up like raisins or prunes or anything else in the United States. . . . I believe that we can impose beauty on our future.”

—adapted from *To Be Young, Gifted, and Black*

Michael Harrington was another writer concerned with poverty in the United States. In his book, *The Other America*, published in 1962, he alerted those in the mainstream to what he saw in the run-down and hidden communities of the country:

“Tens of millions of Americans are, at this very moment, maimed in body and spirit, existing at levels beneath those necessary for human decency. If these

people are not starving, they are hungry, and sometimes fat with hunger, for that is what cheap foods do. They are without adequate housing and education and medical care.”

—from *The Other America*

The poor included single mothers and the elderly; minority immigrants such as Puerto Ricans and Mexicans; rural Americans, black and white; people with disabilities; and inner city residents, who remained stuck in crowded slums as wealthier citizens fled to the suburbs. Poverty also gripped many Americans in the nation's Appalachian region, which stretches from Pennsylvania to Georgia, as well as Native Americans, many of whom endured grinding poverty whether they stayed on reservations or migrated to cities.

The Decline of the Inner City The poverty in the 1950s was most apparent in the nation's urban centers. As white families moved to the suburbs, many inner cities became home to poorer, less educated minority groups. The centers of many cities deteriorated, because as the middle class moved out, their tax money went with them. This deprived inner cities of the tax dollars necessary to provide adequate public transportation, housing, and other services.

When government tried to help inner city residents, it often made matters worse. During the 1950s, for example, **urban renewal** programs tried to

▼ Lorraine Hansberry



eliminate poverty by tearing down slums and erecting new high-rise buildings for poor residents. The crowded, anonymous conditions of these high-rise projects, however, often created an atmosphere of violence. The government also unwittingly encouraged the residents of public housing to remain poor by evicting them as soon as they began to earn any money. In the end, urban renewal programs actually destroyed more housing space than they created. Too often in the name of urban improvement, the wrecking ball destroyed poor people's homes to make way for roadways, parks, universities, tree lined boulevards, or shopping centers.

African Americans Many of the citizens left behind in the cities as families fled to the suburbs were African American. The large number of African American inner city residents resulted largely from the migration of more than 3 million African Americans from the South to the North between 1940 and 1960.

Picturing History

Inner-City Poverty This young African American girl in Chicago's inner city struggles to fill a bowl with water that has frozen due to lack of heat. **Why did the numbers of poor in the country's inner cities grow in the 1950s?**



Many African Americans had migrated in hopes of finding greater economic opportunity and escaping violence and racial intimidation. For many of these migrants, however, life proved to be little better in Northern cities. Fewer and fewer jobs were available as numerous factories and mills left the cities for suburbs and smaller towns in order to cut their costs. Long-standing patterns of racial discrimination in schools, housing, hiring, and salaries in the North kept inner-city African Americans poor. The last hired and the first fired for good jobs, they often remained stuck in the worst-paying occupations. In 1958 African American salaries, on average, equaled only 51 percent of what whites earned.

Poverty and racial discrimination also deprived many African Americans of other benefits, such as decent medical care. Responding to a correspondent who had seen *A Raisin in the Sun*, Lorraine Hansberry wrote, "The ghettos are killing us; not only our dreams . . . but our very bodies. It is not an **abstraction** to us that the average [African American] has a life expectancy of five to ten years less than the average white." Several African American groups, such as the NAACP and the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), pressed for greater economic opportunity for African Americans. In general, however, these organizations met with little success.

Hispanics African Americans were not the only minority group that struggled with poverty. Much of the nation's Hispanic population faced the same problems. During the 1950s and early 1960s, the **Bracero program** brought nearly 5 million Mexicans to the United States to work on farms and ranches in the Southwest. The Braceros were temporary contract workers, and many later returned home. Some came with their families, however, and about 350,000 settled permanently in the United States.

These laborers, who worked on large farms throughout the country, lived a life of extreme poverty and hardship. They toiled long hours for little pay in conditions that were often unbearable. As Michael Harrington noted, "[The nation's migrant laborers] work ten-eleven-twelve hour days in temperatures over one hundred degrees. Sometimes there is no drinking water. . . . Women and children work on ladders and with hazardous machinery. Babies are brought to the field and are placed in 'cradles' of wood boxes."

Away from the fields, many Mexican families lived in small, crudely built shacks, while some did not even have a roof over their heads. "They sleep

Picturing History

Vocational Training Native American Franklin Beaver learns to become a stone mason at this vocational school sponsored by the U.S. Indian Bureau. Why was the government trying to bring Native Americans into mainstream society?



where they can, some in the open,” Harrington noted about one group of migrant workers. “They eat when they can (and sometimes what they can).” The nation would pay little attention to the plight of Mexican farm laborers until the 1960s, when the workers began to organize for greater rights.

Native Americans Native Americans also faced challenges throughout the postwar era of prosperity. By the middle of the 1900s, Native Americans—who made up less than one percent of the population—were the poorest group in the nation. Average annual family income for Native American families, for example, was \$1,000 less than that for African Americans.

After World War II, during which many Native American soldiers had served with distinction, the U.S. government launched a program to bring Native Americans into mainstream society—whether they wanted to assimilate or not. Under the plan, which became known as the **termination policy**, the federal government withdrew all official recognition of the Native American groups as legal entities and made them subject to the same laws as white citizens. At the same time, the government encouraged Native Americans to blend in to larger society by helping them move off the reservations to cities such as Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Although the idea of integrating Native Americans into mainstream society began with good intentions, some of its supporters had more selfish goals. Speculators and developers sometimes gained rich farmland at the expense of destitute Native American groups.

Most Native Americans found termination a disastrous policy that only deepened their poverty. In the mid-1950s, for example, the Welfare Council of Minneapolis described Native American living conditions in that city as miserable. “One Indian family of five or six, living in two rooms, will take in relatives and friends who come from the reservations seeking jobs until perhaps fifteen people will be crowded into the space,” the council reported. During the 1950s, Native Americans in Minneapolis could expect to live only 37 years, compared to 46 years for all Minnesota Native Americans and

68 years for other Minneapolis residents. Benjamin Reifel, a Sioux, described the widespread despair that the termination policy produced:

“The Indians believed that when the dark clouds of war passed from the skies overhead, their rising tide of expectations, though temporarily stalled, would again reappear. Instead they were threatened by termination . . . Soaring expectations began to plunge. Termination took on the connotation of extermination for many.”

—quoted in *The Earth Shall Weep*

Appalachia The nation’s minorities were not the only people dealing with poverty. The picturesque streams and mountains of Appalachia hid the ruined mines, scarred hills, and abandoned farms of impoverished families who had dwelled in these hills for generations.

During the 1950s, 1.5 million people abandoned Appalachia to seek a better life in the nation’s cities. They left behind elderly and other less mobile residents. “Whole counties,” wrote one reporter who visited the region, “are precariously held together by a flour-and-dried-milk paste of surplus foods. . . . The men who are no longer needed in the mines and the farmers who cannot compete . . . have themselves become surplus commodities in the mountains.”

A host of statistics spoke to Appalachia’s misery. Studies revealed high rates of nutritional deficiency and infant mortality. Appalachia had fewer doctors per thousand people than the rest of the country,

and the doctors it did have were older than those in other areas. In addition, schooling in the region was considered even worse than in inner city slums.

✓ Reading Check **Identifying** Which groups of people were left out of the country's economic boom of the 1950s?

Juvenile Delinquency

Main Idea Concerns about rising juvenile delinquency and failing educational systems surfaced during the late 1950s.

Reading Connection Describe the differences and similarities between juveniles in the 1950s and juveniles today. Read on to discover the growing rate of juvenile delinquency during the 1950s.

During the 1950s, many middle-class white Americans found it easy to ignore the poverty and racism that afflicted many of the nation's minorities,

since they themselves were removed from it. Some social problems, however, became impossible to ignore.

One problem at this time was a rise in, or at least a rise in the reporting of, **juvenile delinquency**—anti-social or criminal behavior of young people. Between 1948 and 1953, the United States saw a 45 percent rise in juvenile crime rates. A popular 1954 book titled *1,000,000 Delinquents* correctly calculated that in the following year, about 1 million young people would get into some kind of criminal trouble. Car thefts topped the list of juvenile crimes, but people were also alarmed at the behavior of young people who belonged to gangs and committed muggings, rape, and even murder.

Americans could not agree on what had triggered the rise in delinquency. Experts blamed it on a host of reasons, including poverty, lack of religion, television, movies, comic books, racism, busy parents, a rising divorce rate, and anxiety over the military draft. Some cultural critics claimed that young people were rebelling against the hypocrisy and **conformity** of their parents. Conservative commentators pinned the

Picturing History

Poverty in Appalachia This mining family lived in the kind of extreme poverty that was often overlooked in the 1950s. Eight people lived in this three-room house lined with newspaper. [Why was infant mortality so high in Appalachia?](#)



blame on a lack of discipline. Doting parents, complained Bishop Fulton J. Sheen, had raised bored children who sought new thrills, such as “alcohol, marijuana, even murder.” Liberal observers preferred to pinpoint social causes, blaming teen violence on poverty and feelings of hopelessness among underprivileged youths. Delinquency in the 1950s, however, cut across class and racial lines—the majority of car thieves, for example, had grown up in middle-class homes.

Most teens, of course, steered clear of gangs, drugs, and crime. Nonetheless, the public tended to stereotype young people as juvenile delinquents, especially those teens who favored unconventional clothing, long hair, or street slang.

Many parents were also growing concerned over the nation’s educational system. As baby boomers began entering the school system, they ignited a spurt in school construction. During the 1950s, school enrollments increased by 13 million. School districts struggled to erect new buildings and hire new teachers. Nevertheless, shortages sprang up in both buildings and the people to staff them.

Americans’ education worries only intensified in 1957 after the Soviet Union launched the world’s first space satellites, *Sputnik I* and *Sputnik II*. Many Americans felt they had fallen behind their Cold War enemy and blamed what they felt was a lack of **technical** education in the nation’s schools. *Life* magazine proclaimed a “Crisis in Education,” and



Rebelling Against Conformity This biker, one of the Louisville “Outlaws,” fits the stereotype of the 1950s juvenile delinquent.

offered a grim warning: “What has long been an ignored national problem, *Sputnik* has made a recognized crisis.” In the wake of the *Sputnik* launches, efforts began to improve math and science education in the schools. Profound fears about the country’s young people, it seemed, dominated the end of a decade that had brought great progress for many Americans.

Reading Check **Evaluating** How did many Americans feel about the education system of the 1950s?

HISTORY
Online



Study Central

For help with the concepts in this section of *American Vision: Modern Times* go to tav.mt.glencoe.com and click on **Study Central**.

SECTION 4 ASSESSMENT

Checking for Understanding

- Vocabulary** Define: poverty line, urban renewal, abstraction, termination policy, juvenile delinquency, conformity, technical.
- People and Terms** Identify: Michael Harrington, Bracero program.
- Evaluate** how the federal government’s termination policy affected Native Americans.

Reviewing Big Ideas

- Explaining** Why did urban renewal fail the poor of the inner cities?

Critical Thinking

- Interpreting** What were some possible reasons for a dramatic rise in juvenile delinquency in the 1950s?
- Organizing** Use a graphic organizer similar to the one below to list the groups of Americans who were left out of the country’s postwar economic boom.



Analyzing Visuals

- Analyzing Photographs** Study the photograph on this page. What in the photograph might attract young people to this type of life? Why would others oppose such a life?

Writing About History

- Expository Writing** Using library or Internet resources, find information about juvenile delinquency in the United States today to write a report. Compare today’s problems with those of the 1950s. Share your report with the class. **CA 11WS1.6**

Primary Sources

Eyewitness to History

The 1950s has been depicted as a period of prosperity and conformity. Retreating from the turmoil of World War II and the threat of the Cold War, Americans tried to cling to the security of home and family.

SOURCE 1:

*Sociologist William H. Whyte, Jr., studied the lives and beliefs of men who worked in large businesses. In *The Organization Man*, published in 1956, he reported that rugged individualism had disappeared in favor of conformity.*

Not in the materialism of heroes but in their attitude toward society is where the change has taken place. In older fiction there was some element of conflict between the individual and his environment; no matter how much assisted by coincidence, the hero had to do something—or at least seem to do something—before he got his reward. Rarely now. Society is so **benevolent**¹ that there is no conflict left in it for anyone to be rebellious about. The hero only thinks there is.

Stories must have at least the appearance of a conflict if they are to be stories, but contemporary writers get around this by taking a chunk of environment and then in some fashion disguising its true goodness from the hero. Since this means that the hero's troubles stem from a false image of life, the climax is easily resolved. The author simply tears the veil away. It was really okay all along only the hero didn't know it. Relieved, the hero learns the wisdom of accepting what probably would have happened anyway. . . .

But the general run of current self-improvement books shows a rather steep divergence from the old tradition. On the surface they do not seem to, and



▲ *A typical street in Levittown, Pennsylvania*

their titles promise the old fare. Essentially, however, what they tell you to do is to adjust to the situation rather than change it. . . . [T]he picture they present is one of an essentially benevolent society, and the peace of mind or the positive thinking **extolled**² is a kind of resignation to it.

SOURCE 2:

*William Levitt responded to the enormous demand for housing after World War II by constructing entirely new neighborhoods in several states. A *Time* article from July 3, 1950, describes one of these neighborhoods.*

Like its counterparts across the land, Levittown is an entirely new kind of community. Despite its size, it is not incorporated, thus has no mayor, no police force, nor any of the other traditional city officers of its own.

¹**benevolent:** kind

²**extolled:** highly praised



▲ *Elvis Presley on The Steve Allen Show*

It has no movies, no nightclubs and only three bars (all in the community shopping centers).

And Levittown has very few old people. Few of its more than 40,000 residents are past 35; of some 8,000 children, scarcely 900 are more than seven years old. In front of almost every house along Levittown's 100 miles of winding streets sits a tricycle or a baby carriage. In Levittown, all activity stops from 12 to 2 in the afternoon; that is nap time. Said one Levittowner last week, "Everyone is so young that sometimes it's hard to remember how to get along with older people."

The community has an almost antiseptic air. Levittown streets, which have such fanciful names as Satellite, Horizon, Haymaker, are bare and flat as hospital corridors. Like a hospital, Levittown has rules all its own. Fences are not allowed (though here and there a home-owner has broken the rule). The plot of grass around each home must be cut at least once a week; if not, Bill Levitt's men mow the grass and send the bill. Wash cannot be hung out to dry on an ordinary clothesline; it must be arranged on rotary, removable drying racks, and then not on weekends or holidays. . . .

SOURCE 3:

Elvis Presley's swiveling hips upset many people. He became the target of those who believed that rock 'n' roll was too dangerous for American youth. In the July 16, 1956, issue of Newsweek, John Lardner reviewed Presley's appearance on The Steve Allen Show.

There is nothing to be said against Elvis—and many people have said it—except that when placed in front of a microphone, he behaves like an outboard motor. . . .

Nonetheless, we all watched with interest last week when one of our number, Steve Allen, made a public attempt to neutralize, calm, or de-twitch Elvis Presley, the lively singer.

Allen did this, one assumes, in what he personally considers the best interests of civilization. . . . Civilization today is sharply divided into two schools which cannot stand the sight of each other. One school, Allen's . . . believes in underplaying, or underbidding, or waiting 'em out. The other, Presley's, is committed to the strategy of open defiance, of confusing 'em, of yelling 'em down. The hips and the Adam's apple . . . must be quicker than the eye. . . .

When Allen made his move last week to mute and frustrate Presley . . . [he] was nervous, like a man trying to embalm a firecracker. Presley was distraught, like Huckleberry Finn, when the widow put him in a store suit and told him not to gap or scratch.

Allen's ethics were questionable from the start. He fouled Presley . . . by dressing him like a corpse, in white tie and **tails**.³ This is a costume often seen on star performers at funerals, but only when the deceased has specifically requested it in his will. Elvis made no such request—or for that matter, no will. . . .

➤ ³**tails:** man's tuxedo coat with long tapering ends

DBQ Document-Based Questions

Historical Analysis

CA HR4; HI2

Source 1: Why does Whyte believe that conflict has disappeared?

Source 2: How were the people in Levittown similar?

Source 3: According to Lardner, why did some people dislike Elvis?

Comparing and Contrasting Sources

How is conformity addressed in each of the accounts?

CHAPTER

14

ASSESSMENT and ACTIVITIES



Standards 11.8, 11.8.1, 11.8.2, 11.8.3, 11.8.4, 11.8.7, 11.8.8, 11.10, 11.10.1, 11.10.7, 11.11.2, 11.11.3, 11.11.7

Reviewing Content Vocabulary

On a sheet of paper, use each of these terms in a sentence.

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. closed shop | 9. franchise |
| 2. right-to-work law | 10. baby boom |
| 3. union shop | 11. generation gap |
| 4. featherbedding | 12. poverty line |
| 5. dynamic conservatism | 13. urban renewal |
| 6. white-collar | 14. termination policy |
| 7. blue-collar | 15. juvenile delinquency |
| 8. multinational corporation | |

Reviewing Academic Vocabulary

On a sheet of paper, use each of these terms in a sentence that reflects the term's meaning in the chapter.

- | | | |
|----------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| 16. restrain | 20. benefit | 24. abstraction |
| 17. subsidy | 21. generate | 25. conformity |
| 18. transition | 22. device | 26. technical |
| 19. accompany | 23. controversial | |

Reviewing the Main Ideas

Section 1

27. How did the GI Bill boost the economy after World War II?

Section 2

28. What caused many Americans to move to the suburbs in the 1950s?

Section 3

29. How did the radio industry win back audiences after television developed?

Section 4

30. Which groups of Americans found themselves left out of the postwar economic boom?

Critical Thinking

31.

Reading Skill

Question-Answer Relationships

Review pages 678–679. Write and answer two questions on technological breakthroughs during the 1950s. Identify questions as “author and you” or “on your own” relationships.

32. **Civics** Give examples of the expansion of executive powers during the Truman and Eisenhower administrations in response to the Cold War.
33. **Explaining** How has mass media changed since the 1950s?

Chapter Summary

Signs of Prosperity

Signs of Inequality

Economy

- The GI Bill provided loans to millions of war veterans.
- Consumer spending increased rapidly.
- More Americans owned homes than ever before.

- Workers went on strike for higher wages.
- Truman's civil rights bill did not pass.
- Eisenhower cut back New Deal programs.

Population Patterns

- The U.S. population grew dramatically.
- The number of working women increased.

- Financially able people moved from crowded cities to new suburbs.
- Many poor people remained in cities that now faced major economic and social problems.

Science, Technology, and Medicine

- Medical breakthroughs included the polio vaccine, antibiotics, and treatments for heart disease, arthritis, cancer, and diabetes.
- Improvements in communication, transportation, and electronics allowed Americans to work more efficiently.

- Many poor people in inner cities and rural areas had limited access to health care.

Popular Culture

- Popular culture included new forms of music, radio, cinema, and literature.
- Television replaced radio as the nation's newest form of mass media.

- African Americans and other minorities were, for the most part, not depicted on television.
- Many television programs promoted stereotypical gender roles.

Self-Check Quiz

Visit the *American Vision: Modern Times* Web site at tav.mt.glencoe.com and click on **Self-Check Quizzes—Chapter 14** to assess your knowledge of chapter content.

34. **Evaluating** What factors led to a rise in juvenile delinquency in the United States during the 1950s? **CA HI1**
35. **Organizing** Use a graphic organizer similar to the one below to list the changes to the American family during the 1950s.

Changes to American Family

Writing About History

36. **Historical Analysis** **Analyzing and Understanding Change** How did Truman aid the civil rights movement? Explain what changed for African Americans in the 1950s and why other aspects of society remained the same. **CA CS2**
37. **Big Idea** Write a letter to a friend describing how the American economy changed following World War II. Your letter should describe the changes that impacted society both economically and culturally.

DBQ Document-Based Questions

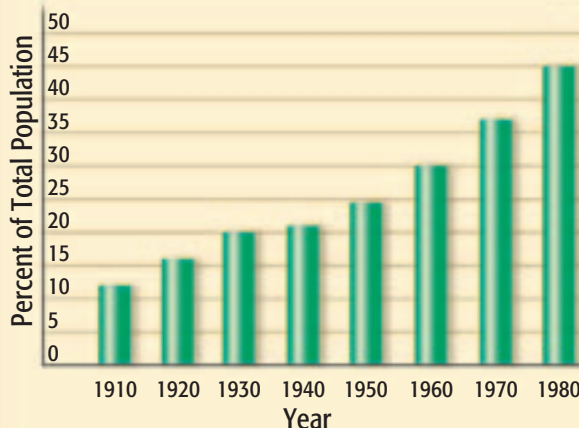
38. **Interpreting Primary Sources** George Gallup, one of the nation's first pollsters, spoke at the University of Iowa in 1953 about the importance of mass media in the United States. Read the excerpt and answer the questions that follow.

“One of the real threats to America's future place in the world is a citizenry which duly elects to be entertained and not informed. From the time the typical citizen arises and looks at his morning newspaper until he turns off his radio or television set before going to bed, he has unwittingly cast his vote a hundred times for entertainment or for education. Without his knowing it, he has helped to determine the very character of our three most important media of communication—the press, radio, and television. . . .”

—quoted in *Vital Speeches of the Day*

- a. According to Gallup, what is a threat to the future of the United States in the world?
- b. How do American citizens determine what is read, seen, and heard in the mass media?

Suburban Dwellers, 1910–1980



Source: *The First Measured Century*.

Geography and History

39. The graph above shows the number of suburban dwellers in the United States as a percentage of the total population. Study the data displayed in the graph and answer the questions below.
- a. **Interpreting Graphs** What trend in the percentage of suburban dwellers does this graph show?
- b. **Understanding Cause and Effect** How might the trend of suburban dwellers shown on this graph have affected life in suburbs and cities?

Standards Practice



Directions: Choose the best answer to the following question.

40. Which of the following was a technological breakthrough in the 1950s?
- A the introduction of new vaccines to fight diabetes and cancer
- B the invention of the radio
- C the first vaccine that prevented polio
- D the development of personal computers

Standard 11.8.7: Describe the effects on society and the economy of technological developments since 1945, including the computer revolution, changes in communication, advances in medicine, and improvements in agricultural technology.