Essential Question
What international and domestic tensions resulted from the Cold War?

What You Will Learn
In this chapter you will learn about the causes and effects of the Cold War.

SECTION 1: Origins of the Cold War
Main Idea The United States and the Soviet Union emerged from World War II as two “superpowers” with vastly different political and economic systems.

SECTION 2: The Cold War Heats Up
Main Idea After World War II, China became a communist nation and Korea was split into a communist north and a democratic south.

SECTION 3: The Cold War at Home
Main Idea During the late 1940s and early 1950s, fear of communism led to reckless charges against innocent citizens.

SECTION 4: Two Nations Live on the Edge
Main Idea During the 1950s, the United States and the Soviet Union came to the brink of nuclear war.

Senator Joseph McCarthy, shown here, charged that Communists had infiltrated many areas of American life.

USA
1945
- United Nations is established.
- Churchill gives his “Iron Curtain” speech.

1950
- U.S. sends troops to Korea.
- Chinese become communist under Mao Zedong.

WORLD
1945
- United Nations is established.
- Truman is elected president.

1949
- United States joins NATO.

1950
- Berlin airlift begins.
- State of Israel is created.
1953 Julius and Ethel Rosenberg are executed as spies.

1954 Senator Joseph McCarthy alleges Communist involvement in U.S. Army.

1960 Francis Gary Powers’s U-2 spy plane is shot down by the Soviets.

1960 John F. Kennedy is elected president.

1959 Fidel Castro comes to power in Cuba.

1955 Cold War Conflicts

Korea: The Forgotten War

At the end of World War II, Americans begin to be haunted by a new fear. The Soviets have embraced a tightly controlled political system called communism. Many believe it threatens the American way of life. Throughout the nation, suspected communists are called before a House subcommittee for questioning. Anyone accused of un-American activity faces public humiliation and professional ruin.

Explore the issues

- Do Americans with communist beliefs pose a threat to the nation?
- What can individual citizens do to protect the rights of all people?
- Should citizens speak out to preserve the rights of others?
Seventy miles south of Berlin, Joseph Polowsky and a patrol of American soldiers were scouting for signs of the Soviet army advancing from the east. As the soldiers neared the Elbe River, they saw lilacs in bloom. Polowsky later said the sight of the flowers filled them with joy.

Across the Elbe, the Americans spotted Soviet soldiers, who signaled for them to cross over. When the Americans reached the opposite bank, their joy turned to shock. They saw to their horror that the bank was covered with dead civilians, victims of bombing raids.

**A Personal Voice**  **JOSEPH POLOWSKY**

“Here we are, tremendously exhilarated, and there’s a sea of dead. . . . [The platoon leader] was much moved. . . . He said, ‘Joe, let’s make a resolution with these Russians here and also the ones on the bank: this would be an important day in the lives of the two countries.’ . . . It was a solemn moment. There were tears in the eyes of most of us. . . . We embraced. We swore never to forget.”

—quoted in *The Good War*

The Soviet and U.S. soldiers believed that their encounter would serve as a symbol of peace. Unfortunately, such hopes were soon dashed. After World War II, the United States and the Soviet Union emerged as rival superpowers, each strong enough to greatly influence world events.

**Former Allies Clash**

The United States and the Soviet Union had very different ambitions for the future. These differences created a climate of icy tension that plunged the two countries into a bitter rivalry.

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**MAIN IDEA**

The United States and the Soviet Union emerged from World War II as two “superpowers” with vastly different political and economic systems.

**WHY IT MATTERS NOW**

After World War II, differences between the United States and the Soviet Union led to a Cold War that lasted almost to the 21st century.

**Terms & Names**

- United Nations (UN)
- satellite nation
- containment
- iron curtain
- Cold War
- Truman Doctrine

- Marshall Plan
- Berlin airlift
- North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

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**Graphic Organizer**

Use the graphic organizer online to take notes on the actions of the United States and the Soviet Union that contributed most to the Cold War.
Under Soviet communism, the state controlled all property and economic activity, while in the capitalistic American system, private citizens controlled almost all economic activity. In the American system, voting by the people elected a president and a congress from competing political parties; in the Soviet Union, the Communist Party established a totalitarian government with no opposing parties.

The United States was furious that Joseph Stalin—the leader of the Soviet Union—had been an ally of Hitler for a time. Stalin had supported the Allies only after Hitler invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941. In some ways, the Americans and Soviets became more suspicious of each other during the war. Stalin resented the Western Allies' delay in attacking the Germans in Europe. Such an attack, he thought, would draw part of the German army away from the Soviet Union. Relations worsened after Stalin learned that the United States had kept its development of the atomic bomb secret.

Discouraged by his business failure, Truman sought a career in politics. As a politician, his blunt and outspoken style won both loyal friends and bitter enemies. As president, his decisiveness and willingness to accept responsibility for his decisions ("The Buck Stops Here" read a sign on his desk) earned him respect that has grown over the years.

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Ironically, even though the UN was intended to promote peace, it soon became an arena in which the two superpowers competed. Both the United States and the Soviet Union used the UN as a forum to spread their influence over others.

TRUMAN BECOMES PRESIDENT For the United States, the key figure in the early years of conflict with the Soviets was President Harry S. Truman. On April 12, 1945, Truman had suddenly become president when Franklin Roosevelt died. This former Missouri senator had been picked as Roosevelt's running mate in 1944. He had served as vice-president for just a few months before Roosevelt's death. During his term as vice-president, Truman had not been included in top policy decisions. He had not even known that the United States was developing an atomic bomb. Many Americans doubted Truman's ability to serve as president. But Truman was honest and had a willingness to make tough decisions—qualities that he would need desperately during his presidency.

Analyzing Causes
What caused the tension between the Soviet Union and the United States after the war?

THE UNITED NATIONS In spite of these problems, hopes for world peace were high at the end of the war. The most visible symbol of these hopes was the United Nations (UN). On April 25, 1945, the representatives of 50 nations met in San Francisco to establish this new peacekeeping body. After two months of debate, on June 26, 1945, the delegates signed the charter establishing the UN.

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THE POTS DAM CONFERENCE  Truman’s test as a diplomat came in July 1945 when the Big Three—the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union—met at the final wartime conference at Potsdam near Berlin. The countries that participated were the same ones that had been present at Yalta in February 1945. Stalin still represented the Soviet Union. Clement Attlee replaced Churchill as Britain’s representative mid-conference, because Churchill’s party lost a general election. And Harry Truman took Roosevelt’s place.

At Yalta, Stalin had promised Roosevelt that he would allow free elections—that is, a vote by secret ballot in a multiparty system—in Poland and other parts of Eastern Europe that the Soviets occupied at the end of the war. By July 1945, however, it was clear that Stalin would not keep this promise. The Soviets prevented free elections in Poland and banned democratic parties.

Tension Mounts
Stalin’s refusal to allow free elections in Poland convinced Truman that U.S. and Soviet aims were deeply at odds. Truman’s goal in demanding free elections was to spread democracy to nations that had been under Nazi rule. He wanted to create a new world order in which all nations had the right of self-determination.

BARGAINING AT POTS DAMA  At the Yalta conference, the Soviets had wanted to take reparations from Germany to help repay Soviet wartime losses. Now, at Potsdam, Truman objected to that. After hard bargaining, it was agreed that the Soviets, British, Americans, and French would take reparations mainly from their own occupation zones within Germany.

Truman also felt that the United States had a large economic stake in spreading democracy and free trade across the globe. U.S. industry boomed during the war, making the United States the economic leader of the world. To continue growing, American businesses wanted access to raw materials in Eastern Europe, and they wanted to be able to sell goods to Eastern European countries.

SOVIETS TIGHTEN THEIR GRIP ON EASTERN EUROPE The Soviet Union had also emerged from the war as a nation of enormous economic and military strength. However, unlike the United States, the Soviet Union had suffered heavy devastation on its own soil. Soviet deaths from the war have been estimated at 20 million, half of whom were civilians. As a result, the Soviets felt justified in their claim to Eastern Europe. By dominating this region, the Soviets felt they could stop future invasions from the west.

Analyzing Causes
B What did Stalin do to make President Truman distrust him?

U.S. Aims Versus Soviet Aims in Europe

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The United States wanted to . . .</th>
<th>The Soviets wanted to . . .</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Create a new world order in which all nations had the right of self-determination</td>
<td>• Encourage communism in other countries as part of the worldwide struggle between workers and the wealthy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Gain access to raw materials and markets for its industries</td>
<td>• Rebuild its war-ravaged economy using Eastern Europe’s industrial equipment and raw materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Rebuild European governments to ensure stability and to create new markets for American goods</td>
<td>• Control Eastern Europe to balance U.S. influence in Western Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reunite Germany, believing that Europe would be more secure if Germany were productive</td>
<td>• Keep Germany divided and weak so that it would never again threaten the Soviet Union</td>
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SKILLBUILDER  Interpreting Charts
1. Which aims involved economic growth of the United States?
2. Which Soviet aims involved self-protection?
Stalin installed communist governments in Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Poland. These countries became known as satellite nations, countries dominated by the Soviet Union. In early 1946, Stalin gave a speech announcing that communism and capitalism were incompatible—and that another war was inevitable.

UNITED STATES ESTABLISHES A POLICY OF CONTAINMENT Faced with the Soviet threat, American officials decided it was time, in Truman's words, to stop “babying the Soviets.” In February 1946, George F. Kennan, an American diplomat in Moscow, proposed a policy of containment. By containment he meant taking measures to prevent any extension of communist rule to other countries. This policy began to guide the Truman administration’s foreign policy.

Europe was now divided into two political regions, a mostly democratic Western Europe and a communist Eastern Europe. In March 1946, Winston Churchill traveled to the United States and gave a speech that described the situation in Europe.

**A Personal Voice  WINSTON CHURCHILL**

“A shadow has fallen upon the scenes so lately lighted by the Allied victory. . . . From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the Continent. Behind that line lie all the capitals of the ancient states of Central and Eastern Europe. . . . All these famous cities and the populations around them lie in . . . the Soviet sphere, and all are subject in one form or another, not only to Soviet influence but to a very high and . . . increasing measure of control from Moscow.”

—“Iron Curtain” speech in Fulton, Missouri

The phrase “iron curtain” came to stand for the division of Europe. When Stalin heard about the speech, he declared in no uncertain terms that Churchill’s words were a “call to war.”
Cold War in Europe

The conflicting U.S. and Soviet aims in Eastern Europe led to the Cold War, a conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union in which neither nation directly confronted the other on the battlefield. The Cold War would dominate global affairs—and U.S. foreign policy—from 1945 until the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991.

THE TRUMAN DOCTRINE The United States first tried to contain Soviet influence in Greece and Turkey. Britain was financially supporting both nations’ resistance to growing communist influence in the region. However, Britain’s economy had been badly hurt by the war, and the formerly wealthy nation could no longer afford to give aid. It asked the United States to take over the responsibility.

President Truman accepted the challenge. On March 12, 1947, Truman asked Congress for $400 million in economic and military aid for Greece and Turkey. In a statement that became known as the Truman Doctrine, he declared that “it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.” Congress agreed with Truman and decided that the doctrine was essential to keeping Soviet influence from spreading. Between 1947 and 1950, the United States sent $400 million in aid to Turkey and Greece, greatly reducing the danger of communist takeover in those nations.

THE MARSHALL PLAN Like post-war Greece, Western Europe was in chaos. Most of its factories had been bombed or looted. Millions of people were living in refugee camps while European governments tried to figure out where to resettle them. To make matters worse, the winter of 1946–1947 was the bitterest in several centuries. The weather severely damaged crops and froze rivers, cutting off water transportation and causing a fuel shortage.

In June 1947, Secretary of State George Marshall proposed that the United States provide aid to all European nations that needed it, saying that this move was directed “not against any country or doctrine but against hunger, poverty, desperation, and chaos.”

The Marshall Plan revived European hopes. Over the next four years, 16 countries received some $13 billion in aid. By 1952, Western Europe was flourishing, and the Communist party had lost much of its appeal to voters.

Background
The Marshall Plan also benefited the United States. To supply Europe with goods, American farms and factories raised production levels. As a result, the American economy continued its wartime boom.
Superpowers Struggle over Germany

As Europe began to get back on its feet, the United States and its allies clashed with the Soviet Union over the issue of German reunification. At the end of World War II, Germany was divided into four zones occupied by the United States, Great Britain, and France in the west and the Soviet Union in the east. In 1948, Britain, France, and the United States decided to combine their three zones into one nation. The western part of Berlin, which had been occupied by the French, British, and Americans, was surrounded by Soviet-occupied territory. (See map, page 605.)

Although the three nations had a legal right to unify their zones, they had no written agreement with the Soviets guaranteeing free access to Berlin by road or rail. Stalin saw this loophole as an opportunity. If he moved quickly, he might be able to take over the part of Berlin held by the three Western powers. In June 1948, Stalin closed all highway and rail routes into West Berlin. As a result, no food or fuel could reach that part of the city. The 2.1 million residents of the city had only enough food to last for approximately five weeks.

THE BERLIN AIRLIFT The resulting situation was dire. In an attempt to break the blockade, American and British officials started the **Berlin airlift** to fly food and supplies into West Berlin. For 327 days, planes took off and landed every few minutes, around the clock. In 277,000 flights, they brought in 2.3 million tons of supplies—everything from food, fuel, and medicine to Christmas presents that the planes’ crews bought with their own money.

West Berlin survived because of the airlift. In addition, the mission to aid Berlin boosted American prestige around the world. By May 1949, the Soviet Union realized it was beaten and lifted the blockade.

Analyzing Effects

What were the effects of the Berlin airlift? 

Beginning in June 1948, planes bringing tons of food and other supplies to West Berlin landed every few minutes.
In the same month, the western part of Germany officially became a new nation, the Federal Republic of Germany, also called West Germany. It included West Berlin. A few months later, from its occupation zone, the Soviet Union created the German Democratic Republic, called East Germany. It included East Berlin.

**THE NATO ALLIANCE** The Berlin blockade increased Western European fear of Soviet aggression. As a result, ten Western European nations—Belgium, Denmark, France, Great Britain, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, and Portugal—joined with the United States and Canada on April 4, 1949, to form a defensive military alliance called the **North Atlantic Treaty Organization** (NATO). (See map, page 624.) The 12 members of NATO pledged military support to one another in case any member was attacked. For the first time in its history, the United States had entered into a military alliance with other nations during peacetime. The Cold War had ended any hope of a return to U.S. isolationism. Greece and Turkey joined NATO in 1952, and West Germany joined in 1955. By then, NATO kept a standing military force of more than 500,000 troops as well as thousands of planes, tanks, and other equipment.

This cartoon depicts the nations that signed the North Atlantic Pact, which created NATO in 1949. The nations, shown as hats, are arranged in a pyramid to show the bigger countries on the bottom supporting the smaller, weaker nations on top.

**MAIN IDEA**

2. **TAKING NOTES** Use a graphic organizer like the one below to describe the U.S. actions and the Soviet actions that contributed most to the Cold War.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>U.S. Actions</th>
<th>Soviet Actions</th>
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Write a paragraph explaining which country was more responsible and why you think so.

**CRITICAL THINKING**

3. **EVALUATING LEADERSHIP** People who had served as aides to President Franklin Roosevelt worried that Truman was not qualified to handle world leadership. Considering what you learned in this section, evaluate Truman as a world leader.

**Think About:**
- his behavior toward Stalin
- his economic support of European nations
- his support of West Berlin

4. **MAKING INFERENCES** Which of the two superpowers do you think was more successful in achieving its aims during the period 1945–1949? Support your answer by referring to historical events.

5. **ANALYZING MOTIVES** What were Stalin’s motives in supporting Communist governments in Eastern Europe?
After World War II, China became a communist nation and Korea was split into a communist north and a democratic south.

Ongoing tensions with China and North Korea continue to involve the United States.

First Lieutenant Philip Day, Jr., vividly remembers his first taste of battle in Korea. On the morning of July 5, 1950, Philip Day spotted a column of eight enemy tanks moving toward his company.

“I was with a 75-mm recoilless-rifle team. ‘Let’s see,’ I shouted, ‘if we can get one of those tanks.’ We picked up the gun and moved it to where we could get a clean shot. I don’t know if we were poorly trained, . . . but we set the gun on the forward slope of the hill. When we fired, the recoilless blast blew a hole in the hill which instantly covered us in mud and dirt. . . . When we were ready again, we moved the gun to a better position and began banging away. I swear we had some hits, but the tanks never slowed down. . . . In a little less than two hours, 30 North Korean tanks rolled through the position we were supposed to block as if we hadn’t been there.”

—quoted in The Korean War: Pusan to Chosin

Only five years after World War II ended, the United States became embroiled in a war in Korea. The policy of containment had led the United States into battle to halt communist expansion. In this conflict, however, the enemy was not the Soviet Union, but North Korea and China.

China Becomes a Communist Country

For two decades, Chinese Communists had struggled against the nationalist government of Chiang Kai-shek (chăn’g kâ’-shĕk’). The United States supported Chiang. Between 1945 and 1949, the American government sent the Nationalists approximately $3 billion in aid.
Many Americans were impressed by Chiang Kai-shek and admired the courage and determination that the Chinese Nationalists showed in resisting the Japanese during the war. However, U.S. officials who dealt with Chiang held a different view. They found his government inefficient and hopelessly corrupt.

Furthermore, the policies of Chiang's government undermined Nationalist support. For example, the Nationalists collected a grain tax from farmers even during the famine of 1944. When city dwellers demonstrated against a 10,000 percent increase in the price of rice, Chiang's secret police opened fire on them.

In contrast, the Communists, led by Mao Zedong (mou’dzã’dông’), gained strength throughout the country. In the areas they controlled, Communists worked to win peasant support. They encouraged peasants to learn to read, and they helped to improve food production. As a result, more and more recruits flocked to the Communists’ Red Army. By 1945, much of northern China was under communist control.

RENEWED CIVIL WAR As soon as the defeated Japanese left China at the end of World War II, cooperation between the Nationalists and the Communists ceased. Civil war erupted again between the two groups. In spite of the problems in the Nationalist regime, American policy favored the Nationalists because they opposed communism.

From 1944 to 1947, the United States played peacemaker between the two groups while still supporting the Nationalists. However, U.S. officials repeatedly failed to negotiate peace. Truman refused to commit American soldiers to back up the nationalists, although the United States did send $2 billion worth of military equipment and supplies.

The aid wasn’t enough to save the Nationalists, whose weak military leadership and corrupt, abusive practices drove the peasants to the Communist side. In May 1949, Chiang and the remnants of his demoralized government fled to the island of Taiwan, which Westerners called Formosa. After more than 20 years of struggle, the Communists ruled all of mainland China. They established a new government, the People’s Republic of China, which the United States refused to accept as China’s true government.
AMERICA REACTS TO COMMUNIST TAKEOVER The American public was stunned that China had become Communist. Containment had failed! In Congress, conservative Republicans and Democrats attacked the Truman administration for supplying only limited aid to Chiang. If containing communism was important in Europe, they asked, why was it not equally important in Asia?

The State Department replied by saying that what had happened in China was a result of internal forces. The United States had failed in its attempts to influence these forces, such as Chiang’s inability to retain the support of his people. Trying to do more would only have started a war in Asia—a war that the United States wasn’t prepared to fight.

Some conservatives in Congress rejected this argument as a lame excuse. They claimed that the American government was riddled with Communist agents. Like wildfire, American fear of communism began to burn out of control, and the flames were fanned even further by events in Korea the following year.

The Korean War

Japan had taken over Korea in 1910 and ruled it until August 1945. As World War II ended, Japanese troops north of the 38th parallel (38° North latitude) surrendered to the Soviets. Japanese troops south of the parallel surrendered to the Americans. As in Germany, two nations developed, one communist and one democratic.

In 1948, the Republic of Korea, usually called South Korea, was established in the zone that had been occupied by the United States. Its government, headed by Syngman Rhee, was based in Seoul, Korea’s traditional capital. Simultaneously, the Communists formed the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea in the north. Kim Il Sung led its government, which was based in Pyongyang. (See map, page 613.)

Soon after World War II, the United States had cut back its armed forces in South Korea. As a result, by June of 1949 there were only 500 American troops there. The Soviets concluded that the United States would not fight to defend South Korea. They prepared to back North Korea with tanks, airplanes, and money in an attempt to take over the entire peninsula.

NORTH KOREA ATTACKS SOUTH KOREA On June 25, 1950, North Korean forces swept across the 38th parallel in a surprise attack on South Korea. The conflict that followed became known as the Korean War.

Within a few days, North Korean troops had penetrated deep into South Korea. South Korea called on the United Nations to stop the North Korean invasion. When the matter came to a vote in the UN Security Council, the Soviet Union was not there. The Soviets were boycotting the council in protest over the presence of Nationalist China (Taiwan). Thus, the Soviets could not veto the UN’s plan of military action. The vote passed.

On June 27, in a show of military strength, President Truman ordered troops stationed in Japan to support the South Koreans. He also sent an American fleet into the waters between Taiwan and China.
In all, 16 nations sent some 520,000 troops to aid South Korea. Over 90 percent of these troops were American. South Korean troops numbered an additional 590,000. The combined forces were placed under the command of General Douglas MacArthur, former World War II hero in the Pacific.

The United States Fights in Korea

At first, North Korea seemed unstoppable. Driving steadily south, its troops captured Seoul. After a month of bitter combat, the North Koreans had forced UN and South Korean troops into a small defensive zone around Pusan in the southeastern corner of the peninsula.

**MACARTHUR’S COUNTERATTACK** MacArthur launched a counterattack with tanks, heavy artillery, and fresh troops from the United States. On September 15, 1950, his troops made a surprise amphibious landing behind enemy lines at Inchon, on Korea’s west coast. Other troops moved north from Pusan. Trapped between the two attacking forces, about half of the North Korean troops surrendered; the rest fled back across the 38th parallel. MacArthur’s plan had saved his army from almost certain defeat.

The UN army chased the retreating North Korean troops across the 38th parallel into North Korea. In late November, UN troops approached the Yalu River, the border between North Korea and China. It seemed as if Korea was about to become a single country again.

**THE CHINESE FIGHT BACK** The Chinese, however, had other ideas. Communist China’s foreign minister, Zhou En-lai, warned that his country would not stand idly by and “let the Americans come to the border”—meaning the Yalu River. In late November 1950, 300,000 Chinese troops joined the war on the side of North Korea. The Chinese wanted North Korea as a Communist buffer state to protect their northeastern provinces that made up Manchuria. They also felt threatened by the American fleet that lay off their coast. The fight between North Korea and South Korea had escalated into a war in which the main opponents were the Chinese communists and the Americans.

By sheer force of numbers, the Chinese drove the UN troops southward. At some points along the battlefront, the Chinese outnumbered UN forces ten to one. By early January 1951, all UN and South Korean troops had been pushed out of North Korea. The Chinese advanced to the south, capturing the South Korean capital, Seoul. “We face an entirely new war,” declared MacArthur.

For two years, the two sides fought bitterly to obtain strategic positions in the Korean hills, but neither side was able to make important advances. One officer remembered the standoff.

A PERSONAL VOICE BEVERLY SCOTT

“...Our trenches... were only about 20 meters in front of theirs. We were eyeball to eyeball. ... We couldn’t move at all in the daytime without getting shot at. Machine-gun fire would come in, grenades, small-arms fire, all from within spitting distance. It was like World War I. We lived in a maze of bunkers and deep trenches. ... There were bodies strewn all over the place. Hundreds of bodies frozen in the snow.”

—quoted in No Bugles, No Drums: An Oral History of the Korean War
American paratroopers comb through a village in North Korea on October 20, 1950, during the Korean War.

GEOGRAPHY SKILLBUILDER

1. **Movement** How far south did North Korean troops push the UN forces?

2. **Place** Why do you think MacArthur chose Inchon as his landing place?

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**June 1950**
North Korean troops invade South Korea and capture the capital, Seoul.

**September 1950**
North Koreans push South Koreans and UN troops south to the perimeter of Pusan.

**September to October 1950**
UN troops under MacArthur land at Inchon and move north from Pusan. This two-pronged attack drives the North Koreans out of South Korea. UN troops then continue into North Korea, take Pyongyang, and advance to the Yalu River.

**November 1950 to January 1951**
The Chinese intervene and force UN troops to retreat across the 38th parallel.

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The Korean War, 1950–1953
MACARTHUR RECOMMENDS ATTACKING CHINA To halt the bloody stalemate, in early 1951, MacArthur called for an extension of the war into China. Convinced that Korea was the place “where the Communist conspirators have elected to make their play for global conquest,” MacArthur called for the use of nuclear weapons against Chinese cities.

Truman rejected MacArthur’s request. The Soviet Union had a mutual-assistance pact with China. Attacking China could set off World War III. As General Omar N. Bradley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said, an all-out conflict with China would be “the wrong war, at the wrong place, at the wrong time, and with the wrong enemy.”

Instead of attacking China, the UN and South Korean forces began to advance once more, using the U.S. Eighth Army, led by Matthew B. Ridgway, as a spearhead. By April 1951, Ridgway had retaken Seoul and had moved back up to the 38th parallel. The situation was just what it had been before the fighting began.

MACARTHUR VERSUS TRUMAN Not satisfied with the recapture of South Korea, MacArthur continued to urge the waging of a full-scale war against China. Certain that his views were correct, MacArthur tried to go over the president’s head. He spoke and wrote privately to newspaper and magazine publishers and, especially, to Republican leaders. MacArthur’s superiors informed him that he had no authority to make decisions of policy. Despite repeated warnings to follow orders, MacArthur continued to criticize the president. President Truman, who as president was commander-in-chief of the armed forces and thus MacArthur’s boss, was just as stubborn as MacArthur. Truman refused to stand for this kind of behavior. He wanted to put together a settlement of the war and could no longer tolerate a military commander who was trying to sabotage his policy. On April 11, 1951, Truman made the shocking announcement that he had fired MacArthur.

Many Americans were outraged over their hero’s downfall. A public opinion poll showed that 69 percent of the American public backed General MacArthur. When MacArthur returned to the United States, he gave an address to Congress, an honor usually awarded only to heads of government. New York City honored him with a ticker-tape parade. In his closing remarks to Congress, MacArthur said, “Old soldiers never die, they just fade away.”

Throughout the fuss, Truman stayed in the background. After MacArthur’s moment of public glory passed, the Truman administration began to make its case. Before a congressional committee investigating MacArthur’s dismissal, a parade of witnesses argued the case for limiting the war. The committee agreed with them. As a result, public opinion swung around to the view that Truman had done the right thing. As a political figure, MacArthur did indeed fade away.

Vocabulary

conspirator: a person who takes part in secretly planning something unlawful

Comparing

How did Truman and MacArthur differ over strategy in the Korean War?
SETTLING FOR STEALEMATE  As the MacArthur controversy died down, the Soviet Union unexpectedly suggested a cease-fire on June 23, 1951. Truce talks began in July 1951. The opposing sides reached agreement on two points: the location of the cease-fire line at the existing battle line and the establishment of a demilitarized zone between the opposing sides. Negotiators spent another year wrangling over the exchange of prisoners. Finally, in July 1953, the two sides signed an armistice ending the war.

At best, the agreement was a stalemate. On the one hand, the North Korean invaders had been pushed back, and communism had been contained without the use of atomic weapons. On the other hand, Korea was still two nations rather than one.

On the home front, the war had affected the lives of ordinary Americans in many ways. It had cost 54,000 American lives and $67 billion in expenditures. The high cost of this unsuccessful war was one of many factors leading Americans to reject the Democratic Party in 1952 and to elect a Republican administration under World War II hero Dwight D. Eisenhower. In addition, the Korean War increased fear of communist aggression and prompted a hunt for Americans who might be blamed for the communist gains.

Vocabulary

demilitarize: to ban military forces in an area or region

THE TWO KOREAS

Korea is still split into North Korea and South Korea, even after more than 50 years. South Korea is booming economically, while North Korea, still communist, struggles with severe shortages of food and energy. Periodically, discussions about reuniting the two countries resume. In 2000, South Korean President Kim Dae-jung won the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts to improve ties with North Korea. The two nations met in North Korea for the first time since the nations were established in 1948. Although economic and political differences continue to keep the two countries apart, there is hope that one day Korea will become a united nation.

South Korean President Kim Dae-jung waves to cheering North Koreans on June 13, 2000.
Tony Kahn made the neighbors uncomfortable because they thought his father, Gordon Kahn, was a Communist. In 1947, Gordon Kahn was a successful screenwriter. However, when a congressional committee began to investigate Communists in Hollywood, Kahn was blacklisted—named as unfit to hire. Later, in 1951, he was scheduled to testify before the committee himself.

To save himself, Gordon Kahn simply had to name others as Communists, but he refused. Rather than face the congressional committee, he fled to Mexico. Tony Kahn remembers how the Cold War hurt him and his family.

“A PERSONAL VOICE  TONY KAHN

“The first time I was called a Communist, I was four years old... I’ll never forget the look in our neighbors’ eyes when I walked by. I thought it was hate. I was too young to realize it was fear.”

—from The Cold War Comes Home

The members of the Kahn family were among thousands of victims of the anti-Communist hysteria that gripped this country in the late 1940s and early 1950s. By the end of the period, no one was immune from accusations.

**Fear of Communist Influence**

In the early years of the Cold War, many Americans believed that there was good reason to be concerned about the security of the United States. The Soviet domination of Eastern Europe and the Communist takeover of China shocked the American public, fueling a fear that communism would spread around the world. In addition, at the height of World War II, about 80,000 Americans claimed membership in the Communist Party. Some people feared that the first loyalty of these American Communists was to the Soviet Union.
LOYALTY REVIEW BOARD  Strongly anti-Communist Republicans began to accuse Truman of being soft on communism. Consequently, in March 1947, President Truman issued an executive order setting up the Federal Employee Loyalty Program, which included the Loyalty Review Board. Its purpose was to investigate government employees and to dismiss those who were found to be disloyal to the U.S. government. The U.S. attorney general drew up a list of 91 “subversive” organizations; membership in any of these groups was grounds for suspicion.

From 1947 to 1951, government loyalty boards investigated 3.2 million employees and dismissed 212 as security risks. Another 2,900 resigned because they did not want to be investigated or felt that the investigation violated their constitutional rights. Individuals under investigation were not allowed to see the evidence against them.

THE HOUSE UN-AMERICAN ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

Other agencies investigated possible Communist influence, both inside and outside the U.S. government. The most famous of these was the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC). HUAC first made headlines in 1947, when it began to investigate Communist influence in the movie industry. The committee believed that Communists were sneaking propaganda into films. The committee pointed to the pro-Soviet films made during World War II when the Soviet Union had been a United States ally.

HUAC subpoenaed 43 witnesses from the Hollywood film industry in September 1947. Many of the witnesses were “friendly,” supporting the accusation that Communists had infiltrated the film industry. For example, the movie star Gary Cooper said he had “turned down quite a few scripts because I thought they were tinged with Communistic ideas.” However, when asked which scripts he meant, Cooper couldn’t remember their titles.

Ten “unfriendly” witnesses were called to testify but refused. These men, known as the Hollywood Ten, decided not to cooperate because they believed that the hearings were unconstitutional. Because the Hollywood Ten refused to answer questions, they were sent to prison.

Paul Robeson was an all-American football player and Phi Beta Kappa member at Rutgers University. After earning a law degree in 1923, he began a distinguished international career as a singer and actor. He was a vocal civil rights activist, and he was sympathetic to the Soviet culture and political philosophy. In 1950, when he refused to sign an affidavit indicating whether he had ever been a member of the Communist Party, the State Department revoked his passport for eight years. During that time, he was unable to perform abroad and was blacklisted at home. His income fell from $150,000 a year to $3,000 a year.
In response to the hearings, Hollywood executives instituted a **blacklist**, a list of people whom they condemned for having a Communist background. People who were blacklisted—approximately 500 actors, writers, producers, and directors—had their careers ruined because they could no longer work.

**THE MCCARRAN ACT** As Hollywood tried to rid itself of Communists, Congress decided that Truman’s Loyalty Review Board did not go far enough. In 1950, Congress passed the McCarran Internal Security Act. This made it unlawful to plan any action that might lead to the establishment of a totalitarian dictatorship in the United States. Truman vetoed the bill, saying, “In a free country, we punish men for the crimes they commit, but never for the opinions they have.” But Congress enacted the law over Truman’s veto.

### Spy Cases Stun the Nation

Two spy cases added to fear that was spreading like an epidemic across the country. One case involved a former State Department official named Alger Hiss.

**ALGER HISS** In 1948, a former Communist spy named Whittaker Chambers accused Alger Hiss of spying for the Soviet Union. To support his charges, Chambers produced microfilm of government documents that he claimed had been typed on Hiss’s typewriter. Too many years had passed for government prosecutors to charge Hiss with espionage, but a jury convicted him of perjury—for lying about passing the documents—and sent him to jail. A young conservative Republican congressman named Richard Nixon gained fame for pursuing the charges against Hiss. Within four years of the highly publicized case, Nixon was elected vice president of the United States.

Hiss claimed that he was innocent and that Chambers had forged the documents used against him. However, in the 1990s, Soviet cables released by the National Security Agency seemed to prove Hiss’s guilt.

### Analyzing Causes

**B** Why was Hollywood a target of anti-Communist investigations by Congress?

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**NOW & THEN**

**TELEVISION: MAKING NEWS** Historians of popular culture believe that the early 1950s were the best years of television. Most programs were filmed live and had a fresh, unrehearsed look. Along with variety shows, early television presented some of the best serious drama of the age.

Since the 1950s, television has also become a major vehicle for reporting the news. Not only does television report the news, it also has increasingly helped to shape it.

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**1954** In 1954, the Communist-hunting senator Joseph McCarthy, in U.S. Senate hearings that were televised live, accused the U.S. Army of “coddling Communists.” As many as 20 million Americans watched the combative senator malign people who had no chance to defend themselves.

**1960** In the 1960 presidential election, a major factor in John Kennedy’s victory over Richard Nixon was a series of four televised debates, the first televised presidential debates in history. An estimated 85 million to 120 million Americans watched one or more of the debates, which turned the tide in favor of Kennedy.
THE ROSENBERGS  Another spy case rocked the nation even more than the Hiss case, partially because of international events occurring about the same time. On September 3, 1949, Americans learned that the Soviet Union had exploded an atomic bomb. Most American experts had predicted that it would take the Soviets three to five more years to make the bomb. People began to wonder if Communist supporters in the United States had leaked the secret of the bomb.

This second spy case seemed to confirm that suspicion. In 1950, the German-born physicist Klaus Fuchs admitted giving the Soviet Union information about America’s atomic bomb. The information probably enabled Soviet scientists to develop their own atomic bomb years earlier than they would have otherwise. Implicated in the Fuchs case were Ethel and Julius Rosenberg, minor activists in the American Communist Party.

When asked if they were Communists, the Rosenbergs denied the charges against them and pleaded the Fifth Amendment, choosing not to incriminate themselves. They claimed they were being persecuted both for being Jewish and for holding radical beliefs. The Rosenbergs were found guilty of espionage and sentenced to death. In pronouncing their sentence, Judge Irving Kaufman declared their crime “worse than murder.” To him, they were directly responsible for one of the deadliest clashes of the Cold War.

A PERSONAL VOICE  IRVING KAUFMAN

“I believe your conduct in putting into the hands of the Russians the A-bomb years before our best scientists predicted Russia would perfect the bomb has already caused, in my opinion, the Communist aggression in Korea. . . .”

—quoted in The Unquiet Death of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg

1967  By 1967, American support for the Vietnam War had plummeted as millions of TV viewers witnessed the horrors of war on the nightly news.

1974  The Watergate scandal that toppled Richard Nixon’s presidency in 1974 played to a rapt TV audience. During the Senate hearings in 1973, the televised testimony of John Dean, the president’s counsel, had convinced two out of three Americans that the president had committed a crime.

2000  During the 2000 presidential election, the TV networks first projected that Al Gore would win Florida. Later, George W. Bush was declared the winner of Florida, a declaration that led Al Gore to concede. Then, when the Florida vote became too close to call, Gore retracted his concession. That “election muddle” blurred even further the already indistinct line between reporting the news and making it.
People from all over the world appealed for clemency for the Rosenbergs. Many considered the evidence and testimony too weak to warrant the death sentence. The case was appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, but the Court refused to overturn the conviction. Julius and Ethel Rosenberg died in the electric chair in June 1953, leaving behind two sons. They became the first U.S. civilians executed for espionage.

**McCarthy Launches His “Witch Hunt”**

The most famous anti-Communist activist was Senator Joseph McCarthy, a Republican from Wisconsin. During his first three years in the Senate, he had acquired a reputation for being an ineffective legislator. By January 1950, he realized that he was going to need a winning issue in order to be reelected in 1952. Looking for such an issue, McCarthy charged that Communists were taking over the government.

**McCarthy’s Tactics** Taking advantage of people’s concerns about communism, McCarthy made one unsupported accusation after another. These attacks on suspected Communists in the early 1950s became known as McCarthyism. Since that time, McCarthyism has referred to the unfair tactic of accusing people of disloyalty without providing evidence. At various times McCarthy claimed to have in his hands the names of 57, 81, and 205 Communists in the State Department. (He never actually produced a single name.) He also charged that the Democratic Party was guilty of “20 years of treason” for allowing Communist infiltration into the government. He was always careful to do his name-calling only in the Senate, where he had legal immunity that protected him from being sued for slander.

The Republicans did little to stop McCarthy’s attacks because they believed they would win the 1952 presidential election if the public saw them purging the nation of Communists. But one small group of six senators, led by Senator Margaret Chase Smith of Maine, did speak out.

**A Personal Voice Margaret Chase Smith**

“I speak as a Republican. I speak as a woman. I speak as a United States senator. I speak as an American . . . . I am not proud of the way in which the Senate has been made a publicity platform for irresponsible sensationalism. I am not proud of the reckless abandon in which unproved charges have been hurled from this side of the aisle.”

—Declaration of Conscience
MCCARTHY’S DOWNFALL Finally, in 1954, McCarthy made accusations against the U.S. Army, which resulted in a nationally televised Senate investigation. McCarthy’s bullying of witnesses alienated the audience and cost him public support. The Senate condemned him for improper conduct that “tended to bring the Senate into dishonor and disrepute.” Three years later, Joseph McCarthy, suffering from alcoholism, died a broken man.

OTHER ANTI-COMMUNIST MEASURES Others besides Joseph McCarthy made it their mission to root communism out of American society. By 1953, 39 states had passed laws making it illegal to advocate the violent overthrow of the government, even though such laws clearly violated the constitutional right of free speech. Across the nation, cities and towns passed similar laws.

At times, the fear of communism seemed to have no limits. In Indiana, professional wrestlers had to take a loyalty oath. In experiments run by newspapers, pedestrians on the street refused to sign petitions that quoted the Declaration of Independence because they were afraid the ideas were communist. The government investigated union leaders, librarians, newspaper reporters, and scientists. It seemed that no profession was safe from the hunt for Communists.

1. TERMS & NAMES For each term or name, write a sentence explaining its significance.
- **HUAC**
- **blacklist**
- **Ethel and Julius Rosenberg**
- **Alger Hiss**
- **Joseph McCarthy**
- **McCarthyism**

2. TAKING NOTES
   Re-create the web below on your paper and fill in events that illustrate the main idea in the center.

Anti-Communist fear gripped the country.

Which event had the greatest impact on the country?

3. HYPOTHESIZING
   If you had lived in this period and had been accused of being a Communist, what would you have done? **Think About:**
   - the Hollywood Ten, who refused to answer questions
   - the Rosenbergs, who pleaded the Fifth Amendment

4. ANALYZING MOTIVES
   Choose one of the following roles: Harry Truman, a member of HUAC, Judge Irving Kaufman, or Joseph McCarthy. As the person you have chosen, explain your motivation for opposing communism.

5. ANALYZING VISUAL SOURCES
   What does this cartoon suggest about McCarthy’s downfall?

"I Can’t Do This To Me!" a 1954 Herblock Cartoon, copyright by the Herb Block Foundation
One American’s Story

Writer Annie Dillard was one of thousands of children who grew up in the 1950s with the chilling knowledge that nuclear war could obliterate their world in an instant. Dillard recalls practicing what to do in case of a nuclear attack.

**A Personal Voice  Annie Dillard**

“At school we had air-raid drills. We took the drills seriously; surely Pittsburgh, which had the nation’s steel, coke, and aluminum, would be the enemy’s first target. . . . When the air-raid siren sounded, our teachers stopped talking and led us to the school basement. There the gym teachers lined us up against the cement walls and steel lockers, and showed us how to lean in and fold our arms over our heads. . . . The teachers stood in the middle of the room, not talking to each other. We tucked against the walls and lockers. . . . We folded our skinny arms over our heads, and raised to the enemy a clatter of gold scarab bracelets and gold bangle bracelets.”

—An American Childhood

The fear of nuclear attack was a direct result of the Cold War. After the Soviet Union developed its atomic bomb, the two superpowers embarked on an arms race that enormously increased both the number and the destructive power of weapons.

**Brinkmanship Rules U.S. Policy**

Although air-raid drills were not common until the Eisenhower years (1953–1961), the nuclear arms race began during Truman’s presidency. When the Soviet Union exploded its first atomic bomb in 1949, President Truman had to make a terrible decision—whether to develop an even more horrifying weapon.
RACE FOR THE H-BOMB The scientists who developed the atomic bomb had suspected since 1942 that it was possible to create an even more destructive thermonuclear weapon—the hydrogen bomb, or H-bomb. They estimated that such a bomb would have the force of 1 million tons of TNT (67 times the power of the bomb dropped on Hiroshima). But they argued vehemently about the morality of creating such a destructive weapon.

Despite such concerns, the United States entered into a deadly race with the Soviet Union to see which country would be the first to produce an H-bomb. On November 1, 1952, the United States won the race when it exploded the first H-bomb. However, the American advantage lasted less than a year. In August 1953, the Soviets exploded their own thermonuclear weapon.

THE POLICY OF BRINKMANSHIP

By the time both countries had the H-bomb, Dwight D. Eisenhower was president. His secretary of state, John Foster Dulles, was staunchly anti-Communist. For Dulles, the Cold War was a moral crusade against communism. Dulles proposed that the United States could prevent the spread of communism by promising to use all of its force, including nuclear weapons, against any aggressor nation. The willingness of the United States, under President Eisenhower, to go to the edge of all-out war became known as brinkmanship. Under this policy, the United States trimmed its army and navy and expanded its air force (which would deliver the bombs) and its buildup of nuclear weapons. The Soviet Union followed suit.

The threat of nuclear attack was unlike any the American people had ever faced. Even if only a few bombs reached their targets, millions of civilians would die. Schoolchildren like Annie Dillard practiced air-raid procedures, and some families built underground fallout shelters in their back yards. Fear of nuclear war became a constant in American life for the next 30 years.

The Cold War Spreads Around the World

As the nation shifted to a dependence on nuclear arms, the Eisenhower administration began to rely heavily on the recently formed Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) for information. The CIA used spies to gather information abroad. The CIA also began to carry out covert, or secret, operations to weaken or overthrow governments unfriendly to the United States.

COVERT ACTIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND LATIN AMERICA One of the CIA's first covert actions took place in the Middle East. In 1951, Iran's prime minister, Mohammed Mossadegh, nationalized Iran's oil fields; that is, he placed the formerly private industries (owned mostly by Great Britain) under Iranian control. To protest, the British stopped buying Iranian oil. As the Iranian economy...
falterred, the United States feared that Mossadegh might turn to the Soviets for help. In 1953, the CIA gave several million dollars to anti-Mossadegh supporters. The CIA wanted the pro-American Shah of Iran, who had recently been forced to flee, to return to power. The plan worked. The Shah returned to power and turned over control of Iranian oil fields to Western companies.

In 1954, the CIA also took covert actions in Guatemala, a Central American country just south of Mexico. Eisenhower believed that Guatemala’s government had Communist sympathies because it had given more than 200,000 acres of American-owned land to peasants. In response, the CIA trained an army, which invaded Guatemala. The Guatemalan army refused to defend the president, and he resigned. The army’s leader then became dictator of the country.

**THE WARSAW PACT** In spite of the growing tension between the superpowers, U.S.-Soviet relations seemed to thaw following the death of Joseph Stalin in 1953. The Soviets recognized West Germany and concluded peace treaties with Austria and Japan. However, in 1955, when West Germany was allowed to rearm and join NATO, the Soviet Union grew fearful. It formed its own military alliance, known as the **Warsaw Pact**. The Warsaw Pact linked the Soviet Union with seven Eastern European countries.

**A SUMMIT IN GENEVA** In July 1955, Eisenhower traveled to Geneva, Switzerland, to meet with Soviet leaders. There Eisenhower put forth an “open skies” proposal. The United States and the Soviet Union would allow flights over each other’s territory to guard against surprise nuclear attacks. Although the Soviet Union rejected this proposal, the world hailed the “spirit of Geneva” as a step toward peace.
THE SUEZ WAR In 1955, the same year in which the Geneva Summit took place, Great Britain and the United States agreed to help Egypt finance construction of a dam at Aswan on the Nile River. However, Gamal Abdel-Nasser, Egypt’s head of government, tried to play the Soviets and the Americans against each other, by improving relations with each one in order to get more aid. In 1956, after learning that Nasser was making deals with the Soviets, Dulles withdrew his offer of a loan. Angered, Nasser responded by nationalizing the Suez Canal, the Egyptian waterway that was owned by France and Great Britain. The French and the British were outraged.

Egyptian control of the canal also affected Israel. Nasser refused to let ships bound for Israel pass through the canal, even though the canal was supposed to be open to all nations. Great Britain, France, and Israel responded by sending troops. The three countries seized the Mediterranean end of the canal. The UN quickly stepped in to stop the fighting. It persuaded Great Britain, France, and Israel to withdraw. However, it allowed Egypt to keep control of the canal.

THE EISENHOWER DOCTRINE The Soviet Union’s prestige in the Middle East rose because of its support for Egypt. To counterbalance this development, President Eisenhower issued a warning in January 1957. This warning, known as the Eisenhower Doctrine, said that the United States would defend the Middle East against an attack by any communist country. In March, Congress officially approved the doctrine.

THE HUNGARIAN UPRISING Even as fighting was raging in the Middle East, a revolt began in Hungary. Dominated by the Soviet Union since the end of World War II, the Hungarian people rose in revolt in 1956. They called for a democratic government.

Imre Nagy, the most popular and liberal Hungarian Communist leader, formed a new government. He promised free elections, denounced the Warsaw Pact, and demanded that all Soviet troops leave Hungary.

The Soviet response was swift and brutal. In November 1956, Soviet tanks rolled into Hungary and killed approximately 30,000 Hungarians. Armed with only pistols and bottles, thousands of Hungarian freedom fighters threw up barricades in the streets and fought the invaders to no avail. The Soviets overthrew the Nagy government and replaced it with pro-Soviet leaders. Nagy himself was executed. Some 200,000 Hungarians fled to the west.

Although the Truman Doctrine had promised to support free peoples who resisted communism, the United States did nothing to help Hungary break free of Soviet control. Many
Hungarians were bitterly disappointed. The American policy of containment did not extend to driving the Soviet Union out of its satellites.

No help came to Hungary from the United Nations either. Although the UN passed one resolution after another condemning the Soviet Union, the Soviet veto in the Security Council stopped the UN from taking any action.

**The Cold War Takes to the Skies**

After Stalin’s death in 1953, the Soviet Union had no well-defined way for one leader to succeed another. For the first few years, a group of leaders shared power. As time went by, however, one man did gain power. That man was **Nikita Khrushchev** (krōōsh’chēf). Like Stalin, Khrushchev believed that communism would take over the world, but Khrushchev thought it could triumph peacefully. He favored a policy of peaceful coexistence in which two powers would compete economically and scientifically.

**THE SPACE RACE** In the competition for international prestige, the Soviets leaped to an early lead in what came to be known as the space race. On October 4, 1957, they launched Sputnik, the world’s first artificial satellite. Sputnik traveled around the earth at 18,000 miles per hour, circling the globe every 96 minutes. Its launch was a triumph of Soviet technology.

Americans were shocked at being beaten and promptly poured money into their own space program. U.S. scientists worked frantically to catch up to the Soviets. The first attempt at an American satellite launch was a humiliating failure, with the rocket toppling to the ground. However, on January 31, 1958, the United States successfully launched its first satellite.

**A U-2 IS SHOT DOWN** Following the rejection of Eisenhower’s “open skies” proposal at the 1955 Geneva summit conference, the CIA began making secret high-altitude flights over Soviet territory. The plane used for these missions was the U-2, which could fly at high altitudes without detection. As a U-2 passed over the Soviet Union, its infrared cameras took detailed photographs of troop movement and missile sites.

By 1960, however, many U.S. officials were nervous about the U-2 program for two reasons. First, the existence and purpose of the U-2 was an open secret among some members of the American press. Second, the Soviets had been aware of the flights since 1958, as Francis Gary Powers, a U-2 pilot, explained.

**A PERSONAL VOICE** Francis Gary Powers

“We . . . knew that the Russians were radar-tracking at least some of our flights. . . . We also knew that SAMs [surface-to-air missiles] were being fired at us, that some were uncomfortably close to our altitude. But we knew too that the Russians had a control problem in their guidance system. . . . We were concerned, but not greatly.”

—Operation Overflight: The U-2 Spy Pilot Tells His Story for the First Time
Finally, Eisenhower himself wanted the flights discontinued. He and Khrushchev were going to hold another summit conference on the arms race on May 15, 1960. “If one of these aircraft were lost when we were engaged in apparently sincere deliberations, it could . . . ruin my effectiveness,” he told an aide. However, Dulles persuaded him to authorize one last flight.

That flight took place on May 1, and the pilot was Francis Gary Powers. Four hours after Powers entered Soviet airspace, a Soviet pilot shot down his plane, and Powers was forced to parachute into Soviet-controlled territory. The Soviets sentenced Powers to ten years in prison.

**RENEWED CONFRONTATION** At first, Eisenhower denied that the U-2 had been spying. The Soviets had evidence, however, and Eisenhower finally had to admit it. Khrushchev demanded an apology for the flights and a promise to halt them. Eisenhower agreed to stop the U-2 flights, but he would not apologize.

Khrushchev angrily called off the summit. He also withdrew his invitation to Eisenhower to visit the Soviet Union. Because of the **U-2 incident**, the 1960s opened with tension between the two superpowers as great as ever.
Science Fiction Reflects Cold War Fears

1950–1959 Many writers of science fiction draw on the scientific and social trends of the present to describe future societies that might arise if those trends were to continue. Nuclear proliferation, the space race, early computer technology, and the pervasive fear of known and unknown dangers during the Cold War were the realities that prompted a boom in science fiction during the 1950s and 1960s.

THE BODY SNATCHERS
Published in 1955 at the height of the Great Fear, Jack Finney’s The Body Snatchers (on which the movie Invasion of the Body Snatchers was based) tells of giant seed pods from outer space that descend on the inhabitants of a California town. The pods create perfect physical duplicates of the townspeople and lack only one thing—human souls.

“Miles, he looks, sounds, acts, and remembers exactly like Ira. On the outside. But inside he’s different. His responses”—she stopped, hunting for the word—“aren’t emotionally right, if I can explain that. He remembers the past, in detail, and he’ll smile and say ‘You were sure a cute youngster, Willy. Bright one, too,’ just the way Uncle Ira did. But there’s something missing, and the same thing is true of Aunt Aleda, lately.” Wilma stopped, staring at nothing again, face intent, wrapped up in this, then she continued. “Uncle Ira was a father to me, from infancy, and when he talked about my childhood, Miles, there was—always—a special look in his eyes that meant he was remembering the wonderful quality of those days for him. Miles, that look, ‘way in back of the eyes, is gone. With this—this Uncle Ira, or whoever or whatever he is, I have the feeling, the absolutely certain knowledge, Miles, that he’s talking by rote. That the facts of Uncle Ira’s memories are all in his mind in every last detail, ready to recall. But the emotions are not. There is no emotion—none—only the pretense of it. The words, the gestures, the tones of voice, everything else—but not the feeling.”

Her voice was suddenly firm and commanding: “Miles, memories or not, appearances or not, possible or impossible, that is not my Uncle Ira.”

—Jack Finney, The Body Snatchers (1955)
THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES
In The Martian Chronicles, Ray Bradbury describes how earthlings who have colonized Mars watch helplessly as their former planet is destroyed by nuclear warfare.

They all came out and looked at the sky that night. They left their suppers or their washing up or their dressing for the show and they came out upon their now-not-quite-as-new porches and watched the green star of Earth there. It was a move without conscious effort; they all did it, to help them understand the news they had heard on the radio a moment before. There was Earth and there the coming war, and there hundreds of thousands of mothers or grandmothers or fathers or brothers or aunts or uncles or cousins. They stood on the porches and tried to believe in the existence of Earth, much as they had once tried to believe in the existence of Mars; it was a problem reversed. To all intents and purposes, Earth now was dead; they had been away from it for three or four years. Space was an anesthetic; seventy million miles of space numbed you, put memory to sleep, depopulated Earth, erased the past, and allowed these people here to go on with their work. But now, tonight, the dead were risen, Earth was reinhabited, memory awoke, a million names were spoken: What was so-and-so doing tonight on Earth? What about this one and that one? The people on the porches glanced sidewise at each other's faces.

At nine o'clock Earth seemed to explode, catch fire, and burn.

The people on the porches put up their hands as if to beat the fire out.

They waited.

—Ray Bradbury, The Martian Chronicles (1950)

A CANTICLE FOR LEIBOWITZ
In A Canticle for Leibowitz, Walter M. Miller, Jr., portrays the centuries after a nuclear holocaust as a new “Dark Age” for humanity on earth.

He had been wandering for a long time. The search seemed endless, but there was always the promise of finding what he sought across the next rise or beyond the bend in the trail. When he had finished fanning himself, he clapped the hat back on his head and scratched at his bushy beard while blinking around at the landscape. There was a patch of unburned forest on the hillside just ahead. It offered welcome shade, but still the wanderer sat there in the sunlight and watched the curious buzzards.

Pickings were good for a while in the region of the Red River; but then out of the carnage, a city-state arose. For rising city-states, the buzzards had no fondness, although they approved of their eventual fall. They shied away from Texarkana and ranged far over the plain to the west. After the manner of all living things, they replenished the Earth many times with their kind.

Eventually it was the Year of Our Lord 3174. There were rumors of war.

—Walter M. Miller, Jr., A Canticle for Leibowitz (1959)
TERMS & NAMES
For each term or name below, write a sentence explaining its significance to the Cold War.

1. containment
2. North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)
3. Mao Zedong
4. Korean War
5. McCarthyism
6. John Foster Dulles
7. brinkmanship
8. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)
9. Nikita Khrushchev
10. U-2 incident

MAIN IDEAS
Use your notes and the information in the chapter to answer the following questions.

Origins of the Cold War (pages 602–608)
1. What were the goals of U.S. foreign policy in the Cold War?
2. Describe the Truman Doctrine and how America reacted to it.
3. What was the purpose of the NATO alliance?

The Cold War Heats Up (pages 609–615)
4. What global events led to U.S. involvement in Korea?
5. What issue between General Douglas MacArthur and President Truman eventually cost MacArthur his job?

The Cold War at Home (pages 616–621)
6. What actions of Joseph McCarthy worsened the national hysteria about communism?
7. How did the Rosenberg case fuel anti-communist feeling?

Two Nations Live on the Edge (pages 622–627)
8. How did the U.S., including the CIA, wage the Cold War in the 1950s?

CRITICAL THINKING
1. USING YOUR NOTES Create a cause-and-effect diagram like the one shown for each of these events: (a) the United States’ adoption of a policy of containment, and (b) the beginning of the nuclear arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union.

2. ANALYZING EVENTS What government actions during the Communist scare conflicted with the Bill of Rights? Explain.

3. INTERPRETING MAPS Look carefully at the map on page 605. How did the absence of a natural barrier on the western border of the Soviet Union affect post-World War II Soviet foreign policy? Explain your answer.
INTERACT WITH HISTORY

Recall the issues that you explored at the beginning of the chapter. Suppose your best friend has been accused of being a Communist. You have been called to serve as a character witness for him or her. Write a speech that you will present to the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC). In your speech explain why you feel that your friend’s constitutional rights are being violated.

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

In a small group read and discuss the “One American’s Story” at the beginning of Section 4. Then use the Internet and library resources to research the steps Americans took to protect themselves from nuclear attack. Use your findings to create a brief illustrated report.

FOCUS ON WRITING

Write a five-paragraph essay that explains how the United States became involved in the Korean War.
Essential Question

What economic, social, and political changes occurred in the postwar United States?

What You Will Learn

In this chapter you will explore the changes that took place in the United States after World War II.

SECTION 1: Postwar America
Main Idea: The Truman and Eisenhower administrations led the nation to make social, economic, and political adjustments following World War II.

SECTION 2: The American Dream in the Fifties
Main Idea: During the 1950s, the economy boomed, and many Americans enjoyed material comfort.

SECTION 3: Popular Culture
Main Idea: Mainstream Americans, as well as the nation’s subcultures, embraced new forms of entertainment during the 1950s.

SECTION 4: The Other America
Main Idea: Amidst the prosperity of the 1950s, millions of Americans lived in poverty.

In the 1950s, the backyard was the perfect place for suburban homeowners to relax.
You have returned home from serving in World War II to find that your country is changing. The cities have swelled. Outlying suburbs are being built up with almost identical homes. America produces more and cheaper goods. In a booming economy, couples marry and start families in record numbers. As you watch clever ads on TV for the newest labor-saving gadgets, you feel nostalgia for a simpler time.

**Explore the Issues**

- How does pressure to conform affect the American dream?
- Who might be excluded from the new prosperity?
- How does advertising promote certain lifestyles and ideals?
Sam Gordon had been married less than a year when he was shipped overseas in July 1943. As a sergeant in the United States Army, he fought in Belgium and France during World War II. Arriving back home in November 1945, Sam nervously anticipated a reunion with his family. A friend, Donald Katz, described Sam’s reactions.

**A Personal Voice Donald Katz**

“Sam bulled through the crowd and hailed a taxi. The cab motored north through the warm autumn day as he groped for feelings appropriate to being back home alive from a terrible war. . . . [He was] nearly panting under the weight of fear. . . . Back home alive . . . married to a girl I haven’t seen since 1943 . . . father of a child I’ve never seen at all.”

— Home Fires

Sam Gordon met his daughter, Susan, for the first time the day he returned home from the war, and he went to work the next morning. Like many other young couples, the Gordons began to put the nightmare of the war behind them and to return to normality.

**Readjustment and Recovery**

By the summer of 1946, about 10 million men and women had been released from the armed forces. Veterans like Sam Gordon—along with the rest of American society—settled down to rebuild their lives.
THE IMPACT OF THE GI BILL  To help ease veterans’ return to civilian life, Congress passed the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act, or the GI Bill of Rights, in 1944. In addition to encouraging veterans to get an education by paying part of their tuition, the GI Bill guaranteed them a year’s worth of unemployment benefits while job hunting. It also offered low-interest, federally guaranteed loans. Millions of young families used these benefits to buy homes and farms or to establish businesses.

HOUSING CRISIS  In 1945 and 1946, returning veterans faced a severe housing shortage. Many families lived in cramped apartments or moved in with relatives. In response to this housing crisis, developers like William Levitt and Henry Kaiser used efficient, assembly-line methods to mass-produce houses. Levitt, who bragged that his company could build a house in 16 minutes, offered homes in small residential communities surrounding cities, called suburbs, for less than $7,000.

Levitt’s first postwar development—rows of standardized homes built on treeless lots—was located on New York’s Long Island and named Levittown. These homes looked exactly alike, and certain zoning laws ensured that they would stay the same. Despite their rigid conformity, Americans loved the openness and small-town feel to the planned suburbs. With the help of the GI Bill, many veterans and their families moved in and cultivated a new lifestyle.

REDEFINING THE FAMILY  Tension created by changes in men’s and women’s roles after the war contributed to a rising divorce rate. Traditionally, men were the breadwinners and heads of households, while women were expected to stay home and care for the family. During the war, however, about 8 million women, 75 percent of whom were married, entered the paid work force. These women supported their families and made important household decisions. Many were reluctant to give up their newfound independence when their husbands returned. Although most women did leave their jobs, by 1950, more than a million war marriages had ended in divorce.

ECONOMIC READJUSTMENT  After World War II, the United States converted from a wartime to a peacetime economy. The U.S. government immediately canceled war contracts totaling $35 billion. Within ten days of Japan’s surrender, more than a million defense workers were laid off. Unemployment increased as veterans joined laid-off defense workers in the search for jobs. At the peak of postwar unemployment, in March 1946, nearly 3 million people were seeking work.

Rising unemployment was not the nation’s only postwar economic problem, however. During the war, the Office of Price Administration (OPA) had halted inflation by imposing maximum prices on goods. When these controls ended on June 30, 1946, prices skyrocketed. In the next two weeks, the cost of consumer products soared 25 percent, double the increase of the previous three years. In some cities, consumers stood in long lines, hoping to buy scarce items, such as sugar, coffee, and beans. Prices continued to rise for the next two years until the supply of goods caught up with the demand.

While prices spiraled upward, many American workers also earned less than they had earned during the war. To halt runaway inflation and to help the nation convert to a peacetime economy, Congress eventually reestablished controls similar to the wartime controls on prices, wages, and rents.
**REMARKABLE RECOVERY** Most economists who had forecast a postwar depression were proved wrong because they had failed to consider consumers’ pent-up accumulation of needs and wants. People had gone without many goods for so long that by the late 1940s, with more than $135 billion in savings from defense work, service pay, and investments in war bonds, Americans suddenly had money to spend. They snatched up everything from automobiles to houses. After a brief period of postwar economic readjustment, the American economy boomed. The demand for goods and services outstripped the supply and increased production, which created new jobs. Judging from the graphs (shown left), many Americans prospered in the 1950s in what the economist John Kenneth Galbraith called “the affluent society.”

The Cold War also contributed to economic growth. Concern over Soviet expansion kept American defense spending high and people employed. Foreign-aid programs, such as the Marshall Plan, provided another boost to the American economy. By helping nations in Western Europe recover from the war, the United States helped itself by creating strong foreign markets for its exports.

**Meeting Economic Challenges**

Despite an impressive recovery, Americans faced a number of economic problems. Their lives had been in turmoil throughout the war, and a desire for stability made the country more conservative.

**PRESIDENT TRUMAN’S INHERITANCE** When Harry S. Truman suddenly became president after Franklin D. Roosevelt’s death in 1945, he asked Roosevelt’s widow, Eleanor, whether there was anything he could do for her. She replied, “Is there anything we can do for you? For you are the one in trouble now.” In many ways, President Truman was in trouble.

Despite his lack of preparation for the job, Truman was widely viewed as honorable, down-to-earth, and self-confident. Most important of all, he had the ability to make difficult decisions and to accept full responsibility for their consequences. As the plaque on his White House desk read, “The Buck Stops Here.” Truman faced two huge challenges: dealing with the rising threat of communism, as discussed in Chapter 26, and restoring the American economy to a strong footing after the war’s end.
TRUMAN FACES STRIKES One economic problem that Truman had to address was strikes. Facing higher prices and lower wages, 4.5 million discontented workers, including steelworkers, coal miners, and railroad workers, went on strike in 1946. Although he generally supported organized labor, Truman refused to let strikes cripple the nation. He threatened to draft the striking workers and to order them as soldiers to stay on the job. He authorized the federal government to seize the mines, and he threatened to take control of the railroads as well. Truman appeared before Congress and asked for the authority to draft the striking railroad workers into the army. Before he could finish his speech, the unions gave in.

“HAD ENOUGH?” Disgusted by shortages of goods, rising inflation, and labor strikes, Americans were ready for a change. The Republicans asked the public, “Had enough?” Voters gave their answer at the polls: in the 1946 congressional elections, the Republican Party won control of both the Senate and the House of Representatives for the first time since 1928. The new 80th Congress ignored Truman’s domestic proposals. In 1947, Congress passed the Taft-Hartley Act over Truman’s veto. This bill overturned many rights won by the unions under the New Deal.

Social Unrest Persists

Problems arose not only in the economy but in the very fabric of society. After World War II, a wave of racial violence erupted in the South. Many African Americans, particularly those who had served in the armed forces during the war, demanded their rights as citizens.

TRUMAN SUPPORTS CIVIL RIGHTS Truman put his presidency on the line for civil rights. “I am asking for equality of opportunity for all human beings,” he said, “... and if that ends up in my failure to be reelected, that failure will be in a good cause.” In 1946, Truman created a President’s Commission on Civil Rights. Following the group’s recommendations, Truman asked Congress for several measures including a federal antilynching law, a ban on the poll tax as a voting requirement, and a permanent civil rights commission.

Congress refused to pass these measures, or a measure to integrate the armed forces. As a result, Truman himself took action. In July 1948, he issued an executive order for integration of the armed forces, calling for “equality of treatment and opportunity in the armed forces without regard to race, color, religion, or national origin.” In addition, he ordered an end to discrimination in the hiring of government employees. The Supreme Court also ruled that the lower courts could not bar

In 1947, Jackie Robinson joined the Brooklyn Dodgers, angering some fans but winning the hearts, and respect, of many others.
African Americans from residential neighborhoods. These actions represented the beginnings of a federal commitment to dealing with racial issues.

**THE 1948 ELECTION** Although many Americans blamed Truman for the nation’s inflation and labor unrest, the Democrats nominated him for president in 1948. To protest Truman’s emphasis on civil rights, a number of Southern Democrats—who became known as **Dixiecrats**—formed the States’ Rights Democratic Party, and nominated their own presidential candidate, Governor J. Strom Thurmond of South Carolina. Discontent reigned at the far left of the Democratic spectrum as well. The former vice-president Henry A. Wallace led his supporters out of mainstream Democratic ranks to form a more liberal Progressive Party.

As the election approached, opinion polls gave the Republican candidate, New York Governor Thomas E. Dewey, a comfortable lead. Refusing to believe the polls, Truman poured his energy into the campaign. First, he called the Republican-dominated Congress into a special session. He challenged it to pass laws supporting such elements of the Democratic Party platform as public housing, federal aid to education, a higher minimum wage, and extended Social Security coverage. Not one of these laws was passed. Then he took his campaign to the people. He traveled from one end of the country to the other by train, speaking from the rear platform in a sweeping “whistlestop campaign.” Day after day, people heard the president denounce the “do-nothing, 80th Congress.”

**STUNNING UPSET** Truman’s “Give ’em hell, Harry” campaign worked. He won the election in a close political upset. The Democrats gained control of Congress as well, even though they suffered losses in the South, which had been solidly Democratic since Reconstruction.
THE FAIR DEAL  After his victory, Truman continued proposing an ambitious economic program. Truman’s Fair Deal, an extension of Roosevelt’s New Deal, included proposals for a nationwide system of compulsory health insurance and a crop-subsidy system to provide a steady income for farmers. In Congress, some Northern Democrats joined Dixiecrats and Republicans in defeating both measures.

In other instances, however, Truman’s ideas prevailed. Congress raised the hourly minimum wage from 40 cents to 75 cents, extended Social Security coverage to about 10 million more people, and initiated flood control and irrigation projects. Congress also provided financial support for cities to clear out slums and build 810,000 housing units for low-income families.

Republicans Take the Middle Road

Despite these social and economic victories, Truman’s approval rating sank to an all-time low of 23 percent in 1951. The stalemate in the Korean War and the rising tide of McCarthyism, which cast doubt on the loyalty of some federal employees, became overwhelming issues. Truman decided not to run for reelection. The Democrats nominated the intellectual and articulate governor Adlai Stevenson of Illinois to run against the Republican candidate, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, known popularly as “Ike.”

I LIKE IKE!  During the campaign, the Republicans accused the Democrats of “plunder at home and blunder abroad.” To fan the anti-Communist hysteria that was sweeping over the country, Republicans raised the specter of the rise of communism in China and Eastern Europe. They also criticized the growing power of the federal government and the alleged bribery and corruption among Truman’s political allies.

Eisenhower’s campaign hit a snag, however, when newspapers accused his running mate, California Senator Richard M. Nixon, of profiting from a secret slush fund set up by wealthy supporters. Nixon decided to reply to the charges. In an emotional speech to an audience of 58 million, now known as the “Checkers speech,” he exhibited masterful use of a new medium—television. Nixon denied any wrongdoing, but he did admit to accepting one gift from a political supporter.

A PERSONAL VOICE  RICHARD M. NIXON

“You know what it was? It was a little cocker spaniel dog in a crate, that he’d [the political supporter] sent all the way from Texas. Black and white spotted. And our little girl—Tricia, the six-year-old—named it Checkers. And you know the kids, like all kids, love the dog and I just want to say this right now, that regardless of what they say about it, we’re going to keep it.”

—“Checkers speech,” September 23, 1952
Nixon’s speech saved his place on the Republican ticket. In November 1952, Eisenhower won 55 percent of the popular vote and a majority of the electoral college votes, while the Republicans narrowly captured Congress.

**WALKING THE MIDDLE OF THE ROAD**

President Eisenhower’s style of governing differed from that of the Democrats. His approach, which he called “dynamic conservatism,” was also known as “Modern Republicanism.” He called for government to be “conservative when it comes to money and liberal when it comes to human beings.”

Eisenhower followed a middle-of-the-road course and avoided many controversial issues, but he could not completely sidestep a persistent domestic issue—civil rights—that gained national attention due to court rulings and acts of civil disobedience in the mid-1950s. The most significant judicial action occurred in 1954, when the Supreme Court ruled in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* that public schools must be racially integrated. (See page 708.) In a landmark act of civil disobedience a year later, a black seamstress named Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a bus to a white man. Her arrest sparked a boycott of the entire Montgomery, Alabama, bus system. The civil rights movement had entered a new era.

Although Eisenhower did not assume leadership on civil rights issues, he accomplished much on the domestic scene. Shortly after becoming president, Eisenhower pressed hard for programs that would bring around a balanced budget and a cut in taxes. During his two terms, Ike’s administration raised the minimum wage, extended Social Security and unemployment benefits, increased funding for public housing, and backed the creation of interstate highways and the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. His popularity soared, and he won reelection in 1956.

**ASSESSMENT**

1. **TERMS & NAMES** For each term or name, write a sentence explaining its significance.
   - GI Bill of Rights
   - suburb
   - Harry S. Truman
   - Dixiecrat
   - Fair Deal

2. **MAIN IDEA**

3. **CRITICAL THINKING**

4. **EVALUATING LEADERSHIP**

5. **CONTRASTING**

   How did Presidents Truman and Eisenhower differ regarding civil rights?
Settled into her brand new house near San Diego, California, Carol Freeman felt very fortunate. Her husband Mark had his own law practice, and when their first baby was born, she became a full-time homemaker. She was living the American dream, yet Carol felt dissatisfied—as if there were “something wrong” with her because she was not happy.

“A PERSONAL VOICE  CAROL FREEMAN

“As dissatisfied as I was, and as restless, I remember so well this feeling [we] had at the time that the world was going to be your oyster. You were going to make money, your kids were going to go to good schools, everything was possible if you just did what you were supposed to do. The future was rosy. There was a tremendous feeling of optimism. . . . Much as I say it was hateful, it was also hopeful. It was an innocent time.”

—quoted in The Fifties: A Women’s Oral History

After World War II ended, Americans turned their attention to their families and jobs. The economy prospered. New technologies and business ideas created fresh opportunities for many, and by the end of the decade Americans were enjoying the highest standard of living in the world. The American dream of a happy and successful life seemed within the reach of many people.

The Organization and the Organization Man

During the 1950s, businesses expanded rapidly. By 1956, the majority of Americans no longer held blue-collar, or industrial, jobs. Instead, more people worked in higher-paid, white-collar positions—clerical, managerial, or professional occupations. Unlike blue-collar workers, who manufactured goods for sale, white-collar workers tended to perform services in fields like sales, advertising, insurance, and communications.
CONglomerates Many white-collar workers performed their services in large corporations or government agencies. Some of these corporations continued expanding by forming conglomerates. (A conglomerate is a major corporation that includes a number of smaller companies in unrelated industries.) For example, one conglomerate, International Telephone and Telegraph (ITT), whose original business was communications, bought car-rental companies, insurance companies, and hotel and motel chains. Through this diversification, or investment in various areas of the economy, ITT tried to protect itself from declines in individual industries. Other huge parent companies included American Telephone and Telegraph, Xerox, and General Electric.

FRANCHISES In addition to diversifying, another strategy for business expansion—franchising—developed at this time. A franchise is a company that offers similar products or services in many locations. (Franchise is also used to refer to the right, sold to an individual, to do business using the parent company’s name and the system that the parent company developed.) Fast-food restaurants developed some of the first and most successful franchises. McDonald’s, for example, had its start when the McDonald brothers developed unusually efficient service, based on assembly-line methods, at their small drive-in restaurant in San Bernardino, California. They simplified the menu, featured 15-cent hamburgers, and mechanized their kitchen.

Salesman Ray Kroc paid the McDonalds $2.7 million for the franchise rights to their hamburger drive-in. In April 1955, he opened his first McDonald’s restaurant in Des Plaines, Illinois, where he further improved the assembly-line process and introduced the trademark arches that are now familiar all over the world.

A Personal Voice Ray Kroc

“It requires a certain kind of mind to see the beauty in a hamburger bun. Yet is it any more unusual to find grace in the texture and softly curved silhouette of a bun than to reflect lovingly on the . . . arrangements and textures and colors in a butterfly’s wings? . . . Not if you view the bun as an essential material in the art of serving a great many meals fast.”

—quoted in The Fifties

SOCial Conformity While franchises like McDonald’s helped standardize what people ate, some American workers found themselves becoming standardized as well. Employees who were well paid and held secure jobs in thriving companies sometimes paid a price for economic advancement: a loss of their individuality. In general, businesses did not want creative thinkers, rebels, or anyone who would rock the corporate boat.
In *The Organization Man*, a book based on a classic 1956 study of suburban Park Forest, Illinois, and other communities, William H. Whyte described how the new, large organizations created “company people.” Companies would give personality tests to people applying for jobs to make sure they would “fit in” the corporate culture. Companies rewarded employees for teamwork, cooperation, and loyalty and so contributed to the growth of conformity, which Whyte called “belongingness.” Despite their success, a number of workers questioned whether pursuing the American dream exacted too high a price, as conformity replaced individuality.

**The Suburban Lifestyle**

Though achieving job security did take a psychological toll on some Americans who resented having to repress their own personalities, it also enabled people to provide their families with the so-called good things in life. Most Americans worked in cities, but fewer and fewer of them lived there. New highways and the availability and affordability of automobiles and gasoline made commuting possible. By the early 1960s, every large city in the United States was surrounded by suburbs. Of the 13 million new homes built in the 1950s, 85 percent were built in the suburbs. For many people, the suburbs embodied the American dream of an affordable single-family house, good schools, a safe, healthy environment for children, and congenial neighbors just like themselves.

**The Baby Boom** As soldiers returned from World War II and settled into family life, they contributed to an unprecedented population explosion known as the baby boom. During the late 1940s and through the early 1960s, the birthrate (number of live births per 1,000 people) in the United States soared. At the height of the baby boom, in 1957, one American infant was born every seven seconds—a total of 4,308,000 that year. The result was the largest generation in the nation’s history.

**SKILLBUILDER Interpreting Graphs**

1. What was the overall trend in the birthrate at the start of World War II, and after the war ended?
2. What was the difference in the birthrate between 1960 and 1970?

*First year for which figures include Alaska and Hawaii.
Source: Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970
Contributing to the size of the baby-boom generation were many factors, including: reunion of husbands and wives after the war, decreasing marriage age, desirability of large families, confidence in continued economic prosperity, and advances in medicine.

**ADVANCES IN MEDICINE AND CHILDCARE** Among the medical advances that saved hundreds of thousands of children’s lives was the discovery of drugs to fight and prevent childhood diseases, such as typhoid fever. Another breakthrough came when **Dr. Jonas Salk** developed a vaccine for the crippling disease poliomyelitis—polio.

Many parents raised their children according to guidelines devised by the author and pediatrician Dr. Benjamin Spock. His *Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care*, published in 1946, sold nearly 10 million copies during the 1950s. In it, he advised parents not to spank or scold their children. He also encouraged families to hold meetings in which children could express themselves. He considered it so important for mothers to be at home with their children that he proposed having the government pay mothers to stay home.

The baby boom had a tremendous impact not only on child care but on the American economy and the educational system as well. In 1958, toy sales alone reached $1.25 billion. During the decade, 10 million new students entered the elementary schools. The sharp increase in enrollment caused overcrowding and teacher shortages in many parts of the country. In California, a new school opened every seven days.

**WOMEN’S ROLES** During the 1950s, the role of homemaker and mother was glorified in popular magazines, movies, and TV programs such as *Father Knows Best* and *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet*. *Time* magazine described the homemaker as “the key figure in all suburbia, the thread that weaves between family and community—the keeper of the suburban dream.” In contrast to the ideal portrayed in the media, however, some women, like Carol Freeman, who spoke of her discontentment, were not happy with their roles; they felt isolated, bored, and unfulfilled. According to one survey in the 1950s, more than one-fifth of suburban wives were dissatisfied with their lives. Betty Friedan, author of the groundbreaking 1963 book about women and society, *The Feminine Mystique*, described the problem.

*For the first time in their history, women are becoming aware of an identity crisis in their own lives, a crisis which . . . has grown worse with each succeeding generation. . . . I think this is the crisis of women growing up—a turning point from an immaturity that has been called femininity to full human identity.*

—*The Feminine Mystique*

The number of women working outside the home rose steadily during the decade. By 1960, almost 40 percent of mothers with children between ages 6 and 17 held paying jobs.
But having a job didn’t necessarily contribute to a woman’s happiness. A woman’s career opportunities tended to be limited to fields such as nursing, teaching, and office support, which paid less than other professional and business positions did. Women also earned less than men for comparable work. Although increasing numbers of women attended four-year colleges, they generally received little financial, academic, or psychological encouragement to pursue their goals.

**LEISURE IN THE FIFTIES** Most Americans of the 1950s had more leisure time than ever before. Employees worked a 40-hour week and earned several weeks’ vacation per year. People owned more labor-saving devices, such as washing machines, clothes dryers, dishwashers, and power lawn mowers, which allowed more time for leisure activities. *Fortune* magazine reported that, in 1953, Americans spent more than $30 billion on leisure goods and activities.

Americans also enjoyed a wide variety of recreational pursuits—both active and passive. Millions of people participated in such sports as fishing, bowling, hunting, boating, and golf. More fans than ever attended baseball, basketball, and football games; others watched professional sports on television.

Americans also became avid readers. They devoured books about cooking, religion, do-it-yourself projects, and homemaking. They also read mysteries, romance novels, and fiction by popular writers such as Ernest Hemingway, John Steinbeck, Daphne du Maurier, and J. D. Salinger. Book sales doubled, due in part to a thriving paperback market. The circulation of popular magazines like *Reader’s Digest* and *Sports Illustrated* steadily rose, from about 148 million to more than 190 million readers. Sales of comic books also reached a peak in the mid-1950s.

3-D comics and 3-D movies were two of the many fads that mesmerized the nation in the 1950s.
The Automobile Culture

During World War II, the U.S. government had rationed gasoline to curb inflation and conserve supplies. After the war, however, an abundance of both imported and domestically produced petroleum—the raw material from which gasoline is made—led to inexpensive, plentiful fuel for consumers. Easy credit terms and extensive advertising persuaded Americans to buy cars in record numbers. In response, new car sales rose from 6.7 million in 1950 to 7.9 million in 1955. The total number of private cars on the road jumped from 40 million in 1950 to over 60 million in 1960.

AUTOMANIA Suburban living made owning a car a necessity. Most of the new suburbs, built in formerly rural areas, did not offer public transportation, and people had to drive to their jobs in the cities. In addition, many of the schools, stores, synagogues, churches, and doctors’ and dentists’ offices were not within walking distance of suburban homes.

THE INTERSTATE HIGHWAY SYSTEM The more cars there were, the more roads were needed. “Automania” spurred local and state governments to construct roads linking the major cities while connecting schools, shopping centers, and workplaces to residential suburbs. The Interstate Highway Act, which President Eisenhower signed in 1956, authorized the building of a nationwide highway network—41,000 miles of expressways. The new roads, in turn, encouraged the development of new suburbs farther from the cities.

Interstate highways also made high-speed, long-haul trucking possible, which contributed to a decline in the commercial use of railroads. Towns along the new highways prospered, while towns along the older, smaller roads experienced hard times. The system of highways also helped unify and homogenize the nation. As John Keats observed in his 1958 book, The Insolent Chariots, “Our new roads, with their ancillaries, the motels, filling stations, and restaurants advertising Eats, have made it possible for you to drive from Brooklyn to Los Angeles without a change of diet, scenery, or culture.” With access to cars, affordable gas, and new highways, more and more Americans hit the road. They flocked to mountains, lakes, national parks, historic sites, and amusement parks for family vacations. Disneyland, which opened in California in July 1955, attracted 3 million visitors the next year.

MOBILITY TAKES ITS TOLL As the automobile industry boomed, it stimulated production and provided jobs in other areas, such as drive-in movies, restaurants, and shopping malls. Yet cars also created new problems for both society and the environment. Noise and exhaust polluted the air. Automobile accidents claimed more lives every year. Traffic jams raised people’s stress levels, and heavy use damaged the roads. Because cars made it possible for Americans to live in suburbs, many upper-class and middle-class whites left the crowded cities. Jobs and businesses eventually followed them to the suburbs. Public transportation declined, and poor people in the inner cities were often left without jobs and vital services. As a result, the economic gulf between suburban and urban dwellers and between the middle class and the poor widened.

Vocabulary
homogenize: to make the same or similar
In the 1950s Americans loved their cars—big, powerful, and flashy. Some car owners spent their leisure time maintaining their automobiles for the daily commute to work or for the annual family vacation on any one of the nation’s 22 new interstate highways.

The Drive-In
Young suburban families piled into their cars to see a movie at one of the country’s 5,000 or so drive-in theaters.

Cruising Teens
Often teenagers drove around familiar neighborhoods ending up at popular teen meeting places to see and be seen.

Car Ads
Not just for transport, cars were marketed for fashion and fun. Car ads used words like “fresh” and “frisky.”

The Drive-Thru
Fast-food restaurants catered to the car culture by offering drive-up service. Waitresses wearing fancy uniforms or roller skates added to the fun of front-seat dining.
Consumerism Unbound

By the mid-1950s, nearly 60 percent of Americans were members of the middle class, about twice as many as before World War II. They wanted, and had the money to buy, increasing numbers of products. **Consumerism**, buying material goods, came to be equated with success.

**NEW PRODUCTS** One new product after another appeared in the marketplace, as various industries responded to consumer demand. *Newsweek* magazine reported in 1956 that “hundreds of brand-new goods have become commonplace overnight.” Consumers purchased electric household appliances—such as washing machines, dryers, blenders, freezers, and dishwashers—in record numbers.

With more and more leisure time to fill, people invested in recreational items. They bought televisions, tape recorders, and the new hi-fi (high-fidelity) record players. They bought casual clothing to suit their suburban lifestyles and power lawn mowers, barbecue grills, swimming pools, and lawn decorations for their suburban homes.

**PLANNED OBSOLESCENCE** In addition to creating new products, manufacturers began using a marketing strategy called **planned obsolescence**. In order to encourage consumers to purchase more goods, manufacturers purposely designed products to become obsolete—that is, to wear out or become outdated—in a short period of time. Carmakers brought out new models every year, urging consumers to stay up-to-date. Because of planned obsolescence, Americans came to expect new and better products, and they began to discard items that were sometimes barely used. Some observers commented that American culture was on its way to becoming a “throwaway society.”

**BUY NOW, PAY LATER** Many consumers made their purchases on credit and therefore did not have to pay for them right away. The Diner’s Club issued the first credit card in 1950, and the American Express card was introduced in 1958. In addition, people bought large items on the installment plan and made regular payments over a fixed time. Home mortgages (loans for buying a house) and automobile loans worked the same way. During the decade, the total private debt grew from $73 billion to $179 billion. Instead of saving money, Americans were spending it, confident that prosperity would continue.

**THE ADVERTISING AGE** The advertising industry capitalized on this runaway consumerism by encouraging even more spending. Ads were everywhere—in newspapers and magazines, on radio and television, and on billboards along the

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**Analyzing Causes**

How did manufacturers influence Americans to become a “throwaway society”?

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In the 1950s, advertisers made “keeping up with the Joneses” a way of life for consumers.
highways—prompting people to buy goods that ranged from cars to cereals to cigarettes. Advertisers spent about $6 billion in 1950; by 1955, the figure was up to $9 billion. Since most Americans had satisfied their basic needs, advertisers tried to convince them to buy things they really didn’t need.

A Personal Voice  Vance Packard

“On May 18, 1956, The New York Times printed a remarkable interview with a young man named Gerald Stahl, executive vice-president of the Package Designers Council. He stated: ‘Psychiatrists say that people have so much to choose from that they want help—they will like the package that hypnotizes them into picking it.’ He urged food packers to put more hypnosis into their package designing, so that the housewife will stick out her hand for it rather than one of many rivals.

Mr. Stahl has found that it takes the average woman exactly twenty seconds to cover an aisle in a supermarket if she doesn’t tarry; so a good package design should hypnotize the woman like a flashlight waved in front of her eyes.”

—The Hidden Persuaders

More and more, ad executives and designers turned to psychology to create new strategies for selling. Advertisers appealed to people’s desire for status and “belongingness” and strived to associate their products with those values.

Television became a powerful new advertising tool. The first one-minute TV commercial was produced in 1941 at a cost of $9. In 1960, advertisers spent a total of $1.6 billion for television ads. By 2001, a 30-second commercial during the Superbowl cost an advertiser $2.2 million. Television had become not only the medium for mass transmission of cultural values, but a symbol of popular culture itself.

1. TERMS & NAMES  For each term or name, write a sentence explaining its significance.
   - conglomerate
   - franchise
   - baby boom
   - Dr. Jonas Salk
   - consumerism
   - planned obsolescence

MAIN IDEA

2. TAKING NOTES  In a graphic organizer like the one below, list examples of specific goals that characterized the American dream for suburbanites in the 1950s.

   The American Dream
   
   Values  Home/Family  Work

   Examples  Examples  Examples

   What do you think the most important goal was?

CRITICAL THINKING

3. ANALYZING EFFECTS  In what ways do you think current environmental consciousness is related to the “throwaway society” of the 1950s? Support your answer.

   Think About:
   - the purchasing habits of 1950s consumers
   - the effects of planned obsolescence
   - today’s emphasis on recycling

4. EVALUATING  Do you think that the life of a typical suburban homemaker during the 1950s was fulfilling or not? Support your answer.

5. INTERPRETING VISUAL SOURCES  This ad is typical of how the advertising industry portrayed housewives in the 1950s. What message about women is conveyed by this ad?

The Postwar Boom  649
The Road to Suburbia

“Come out to Park Forest where small-town friendships grow—and you still live so close to a big city.” Advertisements like this one for a scientifically planned Chicago suburb captured the lure of the suburbs for thousands of growing families in the 1950s. The publicity promised affordable housing, congenial neighbors, fresh air and open spaces, good schools, and easy access to urban jobs and culture. Good transportation was the lifeline of suburban growth a half century ago, and it continues to spur expansion today.

1 WHERE THE 'BURBS ARE

Park Forest was planned from its conception in 1945 to be a “complete community for middle-income families with children.” The setting was rural—amidst cornfields and forest preserves about 30 miles south of Chicago. But it was convenient to commuter lines, like the Illinois Central (IC) Railroad, and to major roads, such as Western Avenue.

SHARED PRIVACY

By 1952, development in Park Forest, Illinois had expanded to include both low-cost rental units and single-family homes. All the streets were curved to slow traffic, present a pleasing sweep of space, and give residents maximum privacy and space for yards.
2 THE COMMUTER CRUSH
Men commuted to work on the IC railroad, while their wives usually stayed home to take care of the children, who thrived in Park Forest’s safe, wholesome family environment.

3 SHOPPING CENTERS
Consumerism became a driving force in the 1950s, and Park Forest kept up with the trend. The central shopping center served the community well until the late 1960s. When Interstate 57 was built, a mammoth mall, built just off the highway, caused the original shopping area to decline. Park Forest is still struggling to revive its central shopping area.

THINKING CRITICALLY

1. Analyzing Patterns How did the availability of transportation influence the creation and ongoing development of Park Forest?

2. Creating a Database Pose a historical question about a suburb near you. Collect statistics about changes in population, living patterns, income, and economic development in that suburb. Use those statistics to create a database that will help answer your questions.

SEE SKILLBUILDER HANDBOOK, PAGE R33.
Mainstream Americans, as well as the nation’s subcultures, embraced new forms of entertainment during the 1950s.

Television and rock ‘n’ roll, integral parts of the nation’s culture today, emerged during the postwar era.

H. B. Barnum, a 14-year-old saxophone player who later became a music producer, was one of many teenagers in the 1950s drawn to a new style of music that featured hard-driving African-American rhythm and blues. Barnum described the first time he saw the rhythm-and-blues performer Richard Wayne Penniman, better known as Little Richard.

“...He’d just burst onto the stage from anywhere, and you wouldn’t be able to hear anything but the roar of the audience. . . . He’d be on the stage, he’d be off the stage, he’d be jumping and yelling, screaming, whipping the audience on. . . . Then when he finally did hit the piano and just went into di-di-di-di-di-di, you know, well nobody can do that as fast as Richard. It just took everybody by surprise.”

—quoted in The Rise and Fall of Popular Music

Born poor, Little Richard wore flashy clothes on stage, curled his hair, and shouted the lyrics to his songs. As one writer observed, “In two minutes [he] used as much energy as an all-night party.” The music he and others performed became a prominent part of the American culture in the 1950s, a time when both mainstream America and those outside it embraced new and innovative forms of entertainment.

New Era of the Mass Media

Compared with other mass media—means of communication that reach large audiences—television developed with lightning speed. First widely available in 1948, television had reached 9 percent of American homes by 1950 and 55 percent of homes by 1954. In 1960, almost 90 percent—45 million—of American homes had television sets. Clearly, TV was the entertainment and information marvel of the postwar years.
THE RISE OF TELEVISION

Early television sets were small boxes with round screens. Programming was meager, and broadcasts were in black and white. The first regular broadcasts, beginning in 1949, reached only a small part of the East Coast and offered only two hours of programs per week. Post–World War II innovations such as microwave relays, which could transmit television waves over long distances, sent the television industry soaring. By 1956, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC)—the government agency that regulates and licenses television, telephone, telegraph, radio, and other communications industries—had allowed 500 new stations to broadcast.

This period of rapid expansion was the “golden age” of television entertainment—and entertainment in the 1950s often meant comedy. Milton Berle attracted huge audiences with The Texaco Star Theater, and Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz’s early situation comedy, I Love Lucy, began its enormously popular run in 1951.

At the same time, veteran radio broadcaster Edward R. Murrow introduced two innovations: on-the-scene news reporting, with his program, See It Now (1951–1958), and interviewing, with Person to Person (1953–1960). Westerns, sports events, and original dramas shown on Playhouse 90 and Studio One offered entertainment variety. Children’s programs, such as The Mickey Mouse Club and The Howdy Doody Show, attracted loyal young fans.

American businesses took advantage of the opportunities offered by the new television industry. Advertising expenditures on TV, which were $170 million in 1950, reached nearly $2 billion in 1960.

Sales of TV Guide, introduced in 1953, quickly outpaced sales of other magazines. In 1954, the food industry introduced a new convenience item, the frozen TV dinner. Complete, ready-to-heat individual meals on disposable aluminum trays, TV dinners made it easy for people to eat without missing their favorite shows.

HISTORICAL SPOTLIGHT

TV QUIZ SHOWS

Beginning with The $64,000 Question in 1955, television created hit quiz shows by adopting a popular format from radio and adding big cash prizes.

The quiz show Twenty-One made a star of a shy English professor named Charles Van Doren. He rode a wave of fame and fortune until 1958, when a former contestant revealed that, to heighten the dramatic impact, producers had been giving some of the contestants the right answers.

A scandal followed when a congressional subcommittee confirmed the charges. Most of the quiz shows soon left the air.

Analyzing Effects

A How did the emergence of television affect American culture in the 1950s?

SKILLBUILDER Interpreting Graphs

1. During which decade did the number of households with TV sets increase the most?
2. During what period did TV viewing decline?
STEREOTYPES AND GUNSLINGERS Not everyone was thrilled with television, though. Critics objected to its effects on children and its stereotypical portrayal of women and minorities. Women did, in fact, appear in stereotypical roles, such as the ideal mothers of *Father Knows Best* and *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet*. Male characters outnumbered women characters three to one. African Americans and Latinos rarely appeared in television programs at all.

Television in the 1950s portrayed an idealized white America. For the most part, it omitted references to poverty, diversity, and contemporary conflicts, such as the struggle of the civil rights movement against racial discrimination. Instead, it glorified the historical conflicts of the Western frontier in hit shows such as *Gunsmoke* and *Have Gun Will Travel*. The level of violence in these popular shows led to ongoing concerns about the effect of television on children. In 1961, Federal Communications Commission chairman Newton Minow voiced this concern to the leaders of the television industry.

**A Personal Voice Newton Minow**

"When television is bad, nothing is worse. I invite you to sit down in front of your television set when your station goes on the air . . . and keep your eyes glued to that set until the station signs off. I can assure you that you will observe a vast wasteland."  

—speech to the National Association of Broadcasters, Washington, D.C., May 9, 1961

RADIO AND MOVIES Although TV turned out to be wildly popular, radio and movies survived. But instead of competing with television’s mass market for drama and variety shows, radio stations turned to local programming of news, weather, music, and community issues. The strategy paid off. During the decade, radio advertising rose by 35 percent, and the number of radio stations increased by 50 percent.

From the beginning, television cut into the profitable movie market. In 1948, 18,500 movie theaters had drawn nearly 90 million paid admissions per week. As more people stayed home to watch TV, the number of moviegoers decreased by nearly half. As early as 1951, producer David Selznick worried about Hollywood: "It'll never come back. It'll just keep on crumbling until finally the wind blows the last studio prop across the sands."

But Hollywood did not crumble and blow away. Instead, it capitalized on the advantages that movies still held over television—size, color, and stereophonic sound. Stereophonic sound, which surrounded the viewer, was introduced in 1952. By 1954, more than 50 percent of movies were in color. By contrast, color television, which became available that year, did not become widespread until the
next decade. In 1953, 20th Century Fox introduced CinemaScope, which projected a wide-angle image on a broad screen. The industry also tried novelty features: Smell-O-Vision and Aroma-Rama piped smells into the theaters to coincide with events shown on the screen. Three-dimensional images, viewed through special glasses supplied by the theaters, appeared to leap into the audience.

A Subculture Emerges

Although the mass media found a wide audience for their portrayals of mostly white popular culture, dissenting voices rang out throughout the 1950s. The messages of the beat movement in literature, and of rock ‘n’ roll in music, clashed with the tidy suburban view of life and set the stage for the counterculture that would burst forth in the late 1960s.

THE BEAT MOVEMENT Centered in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and New York City’s Greenwich Village, the beat movement expressed the social and literary nonconformity of artists, poets, and writers. The word beat originally meant “weary” but came to refer as well to a musical beat.

Followers of this movement, called beats or beatniks, lived nonconformist lives. They tended to shun regular work and sought a higher consciousness through Zen Buddhism, music, and, sometimes, drugs.

Many beat poets and writers believed in imposing as little structure as possible on their artistic works, which often had a free, open form. They read their poetry aloud in coffeehouses and other gathering places. Works that capture the essence of this era include Allen Ginsberg’s long, free-verse poem, Howl, published in 1956, and Jack Kerouac’s novel of the movement, On the Road, published in 1957. This novel describes a nomadic search across America for authentic experiences, people, and values.

A PERSONAL VOICE JACK KEROUAC

“[T]he only people for me are the mad ones, the ones who are mad to live, mad to talk, mad to be saved . . . the ones who never yawn or say a commonplace thing, but burn, burn, burn like fabulous yellow roman candles exploding like spiders across the stars.”

—On the Road

Many mainstream Americans found this lifestyle less enchanting. Look magazine proclaimed, “There’s nothing really new about the beat philosophy. It consists merely of the average American’s value scale—turned inside out. The goals of the Beat are not watching TV, not wearing gray flannel, not owning a home in the suburbs, and especially—not working.” Nonetheless, the beatnik attitudes, way of life, and literature attracted the attention of the media and fired the imaginations of many college students.

African Americans and Rock ‘n’ Roll

While beats expressed themselves in unstructured literature, musicians in the 1950s added electronic instruments to traditional blues music, creating rhythm and blues. In 1951, a Cleveland, Ohio, radio disc jockey named Alan Freed was among the first to play the music. This audience was mostly white but the music usually was produced by African-American musicians. Freed’s listeners responded enthusiastically, and Freed began promoting the new music that grew out of rhythm and blues and country and pop. He called the music rock ‘n’ roll, a name that has come to mean music that’s both black and white—music that is American.
History Through Music

ROCK ‘N’ ROLL In the early and mid-1950s, Richard Penniman, Chuck Berry, Bill Haley and His Comets, and especially Elvis Presley brought rock ‘n’ roll to a frantic pitch of popularity among the newly affluent teens who bought their records. The music’s heavy rhythm, simple melodies, and lyrics—featuring love, cars, and the problems of being young—captivated teenagers across the country.

Elvis Presley, the unofficial “King of Rock ‘n’ Roll,” first developed his musical style by singing in church and listening to gospel, country, and blues music on the radio in Memphis, Tennessee. When he was a young boy, his mother gave him a guitar, and years later he paid four dollars of his own money to record two songs in 1953. Sam Phillips, a rhythm-and-blues producer, discovered Presley and produced his first records. In 1955, Phillips sold Presley’s contract to RCA for $35,000.

Presley’s live appearances were immensely popular, and 45 of his records sold over a million copies, including “Heartbreak Hotel,” “Hound Dog,” “All Shook Up,” “Don’t Be Cruel,” and “Burning Love.” Although Look magazine dismissed him as “a wild troubadour who wails rock ‘n’ roll tunes, flails erratically at a guitar, and wriggles like a peep-show dancer,” Presley’s rebellious style captivated young audiences. Girls screamed and fainted when he performed, and boys tried to imitate him.

Not surprisingly, many adults condemned rock ‘n’ roll. They believed that the new music would lead to teenage delinquency and immorality. In a few cities, rock ‘n’ roll concerts were banned. But despite this controversy, television and radio exposure helped bring rock ‘n’ roll into the mainstream, and it became more acceptable by the end of the decade. Record sales, which were 189 million in 1950, grew with the popularity of rock ‘n’ roll, reaching 600 million in 1960.

Chuck Berry is as much known for his “duck walk” as for his electric guitar-playing heard on hit records including “Johnny B. Goode” and “Maybellene.”

“HOUND DOG”—A ROCK ‘N’ ROLL CROSSOVER

Few examples highlight the influence African Americans had on rock ‘n’ roll—and the lack of credit and compensation they received for their efforts—more than the story of Willie Mae “Big Mama” Thornton.

In 1953, she recorded and released the song “Hound Dog” to little fanfare. She received a mere $500 in royalties. Only three years later, Elvis Presley recorded a version of the tune, which sold millions of records. Despite her contributions, Thornton reaped few rewards and struggled her entire career to make ends meet.

SKILLBUILDER

Developing Historical Perspective

1. Why might black musicians have been commercially less successful than white musicians in the 1950s? Explain.

2. What concerns of the current generation are reflected in today’s popular music?

SEE SKILLBUILDER HANDBOOK, PAGE R11.
THE RACIAL GAP  African-American music had inspired the birth of rock ‘n’ roll, and many of the genre’s greatest performers were—like Berry and Penniman—African Americans. In other musical genres, singers Nat “King” Cole and Lena Horne, singer and actor Harry Belafonte, and many others paved the way for minority representation in the entertainment fields. Musicians like Miles Davis, Sonny Rollins, Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, and Thelonius Monk played a style of music characterized by the use of improvisation, called jazz. These artists entertained audiences of all races.

But throughout the 1950s, African-American shows were mostly broadcast on separate stations. By 1954, there were 250 radio stations nationwide aimed specifically at African-American listeners. African-American stations were part of radio’s attempt to counter the mass popularity of television by targeting specific audiences. These stations also served advertisers who wanted to reach a large African-American audience. But it was the black listeners—who had fewer television sets than whites and did not find themselves reflected in mainstream programming—who appreciated the stations most. Thulani Davis, a poet, journalist, and playwright, expressed the feelings of one listener about African-American radio (or “race radio” as the character called it) in her novel 1959.

**A Personal Voice  THULANI DAVIS**

“Billie Holiday died and I turned twelve on the same hot July day. The saddest singing in the world was coming out of the radio, race radio that is, the radio of the race. The white stations were on the usual relentless rounds of Pat Boone, Teresa Brewer, and anybody else who couldn’t sing but liked to cover songs that were once colored. . . . White radio was at least honest—they knew anybody in the South could tell Negro voices from white ones, and so they didn’t play our stuff.”

—1959

At the end of the 1950s, African Americans were still largely segregated from the dominant culture. This ongoing segregation—and the racial tensions it fed—would become a powerful force for change in the turbulent 1960s.

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**ASSESSMENT**

**1. TERMS & NAMES** For each term, write a sentence explaining its significance.

- mass media
- Federal Communications Commission (FCC)
- beat movement
- rock ‘n’ roll
- jazz

**MAIN IDEA**

2. **SUMMARIZING**

Create a “Who’s Who” chart of popular culture idols of the 1950s. Identify the art form and major achievements associated with each person.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Art Form</th>
<th>Achievements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Why do you think they appealed to the young people of the 1950s?

**CRITICAL THINKING**

3. **EVALUATING**

Do you agree with Newton Minow’s statement, on page 654, that TV was “a vast wasteland”? Support your answer with details from the text.

4. **ANALYZING EFFECTS**

How did radio, TV, and the movies contribute to the success of rock ‘n’ roll?

5. **COMPARING AND CONTRASTING**

In what ways were the rock ‘n’ roll musicians and the beat poets of the 1950s similar and different? Support your answer with details from the text. **Think About:**

- the values the musicians and poets believed in
- people’s reactions to the musicians, poets, and writers
The Emergence of the Teenager

Life after World War II brought changes in the family. For the first time, the teenage years were recognized as an important and unique developmental stage between childhood and adulthood. The booming postwar economy made it possible for teenagers to stay in school instead of working to help support their families, and allowed their parents to give them generous allowances. American business, particularly the music and movie industries, rushed to court this new consumer group.

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TEENS AS CONSUMERS

Comic books, pimple creams, and soft drinks were just a few of the products aimed at teenagers with money to spend.
THE TEEN MOVIE SCENE
Teenagers with money in their pockets often found themselves at the movies. Hollywood responded by producing films especially for teens. Rebel Without a Cause (1955) told the story of a troubled youth driven by anger and fear. It starred teen heart-throbs James Dean and Natalie Wood.

ROCKING TO A NEW BEAT
Teenagers seeking a collective identity found it in rock ‘n’ roll, a fresh form of music that delighted teenagers and enraged their parents. Dick Clark’s American Bandstand (shown at left) showcased young performers playing music ranging from doo-wop (shown above) to hard-driving rhythm and blues. The songs they sang underscored themes of alienation and heartbreak.

TEENAGE TIDBITS
- A Life magazine survey showed that, during the 1950s, teens spent $20 million on lipstick alone.
- In 1956, a total of 42,000 drive-in movie theaters—heavily frequented by teenagers—took in one-quarter of the year’s total box-office receipts.
- College enrollments more than doubled between 1946 and 1960.
- A weekly credit payment for a record player was $1.

CONNECT TO HISTORY
1. Interpreting Data What were some causes of the booming teenage market in the 1950s? To answer the question, review the entire feature, including the Data File.

CONNECT TO TODAY
2. Analyzing Movies Today What types of movies do American studios make for the teenage market today? How do these movies differ from those of the 1950s?
James Baldwin was born in New York City, the eldest of nine children, and grew up in the poverty of the Harlem ghetto. As a novelist, essayist, and playwright, he eloquently portrayed the struggles of African Americans against racial injustice and discrimination. He wrote a letter to his young nephew to mark the 100th anniversary of emancipation, although, in his words, “the country is celebrating one hundred years of freedom one hundred years too soon.”

“For many Americans, the 1950s were a time of unprecedented prosperity. But not everyone experienced this financial well-being. In the “other” America, about 40 million people lived in poverty, untouched by the economic boom.

The Urban Poor

Despite the portrait painted by popular culture, life in postwar America did not live up to the “American dream.” In 1962, nearly one out of every four Americans was living below the poverty level. Many of these poor were elderly people, single women and their children, or members of minority groups, including African Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans.

WHITE FLIGHT In the 1950s, millions of middle-class white Americans left the cities for the suburbs, taking with them precious economic resources and isolating themselves from other races and classes. At the same time, the rural poor migrated to the inner cities. Between the end of World War II and 1960, nearly 5 million African Americans moved from the rural South to urban areas.
The urban crisis prompted by the “white flight” had a direct impact on poor whites and nonwhites. The cities lost not only people and businesses but also the property they owned and income taxes they had paid. City governments could no longer afford to properly maintain or improve schools, public transportation, and police and fire departments—and the urban poor suffered.

**THE INNER CITIES** While poverty grew rapidly in the decaying inner cities, many suburban Americans remained unaware of it. Some even refused to believe that poverty could exist in the richest, most powerful nation on earth. Each year, the federal government calculates the minimum amount of income needed to survive—the poverty line. In 1959, the poverty line for a family of four was $2,973. In 2000, it was $17,601.

After living among the nation’s poor across America, Michael Harrington published a shocking account that starkly illuminated the issue of poverty. In *The Other America: Poverty in the United States* (1962), he not only confirmed that widespread poverty existed but also exposed its brutal reality.

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**A PERSONAL VOICE**  
*MICHAEL HARRINGTON*

“The poor get sick more than anyone else in the society. . . . When they become sick, they are sick longer than any other group in the society. Because they are sick more often and longer than anyone else, they lose wages and work, and find it difficult to hold a steady job. And because of this, they cannot pay for good housing, for a nutritious diet, for doctors.”

—The Other America

**URBAN RENEWAL** Most African Americans, Native Americans, and Latinos in the cities had to live in dirty, crowded slums. One proposed solution to the housing problem in inner cities was **urban renewal**. The National Housing Act of 1949 was passed to provide “a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family.” This act called for tearing down rundown neighborhoods and constructing low-income housing. Later, the nation’s leaders would create a new cabinet position, Housing and Urban Development (HUD), to aid in improving conditions in the inner city.

Although dilapidated areas were razed, parking lots, shopping centers, highways, parks, and factories were constructed on some of the cleared land, and there was seldom enough new housing built to accommodate all the displaced people. For example, a *barrio* in Los Angeles was torn down to make way for Dodger Stadium, and poor people who were displaced from their homes simply moved from one ghetto to another. Some critics of urban renewal claimed that it had merely become urban removal.

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**Figures are for year-round, full-time employment.**

**Source:** The First Measured Century, Theodore Caplow, 2001

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**SKILLBUILDER**  
**Interpreting Graphs**

1. **What trend does the graph show from 1940–1980?**
2. **What factors affecting people’s lives might contribute to the income gap?**
Poverty Leads to Activism

Despite ongoing poverty, during the 1950s, African Americans began to make significant strides toward the reduction of racial discrimination and segregation. Inspired by the African-American civil rights movement, other minorities also began to develop a deeper political awareness and a voice. Mexican-American activism gathered steam after veterans returned from World War II, and a major change in government policy under Eisenhower’s administration fueled Native American protest.

MEXICANS SEEK EMPLOYMENT Many Mexicans had become U.S. citizens during the 19th century, when the United States had annexed the Southwest after the War with Mexico. Large numbers of Mexicans had also crossed the border to work in the United States during and after World War I.

When the United States entered World War II, the shortage of agricultural laborers spurred the federal government to initiate, in 1942, a program in which Mexican braceros (brəˈsärəs), or hired hands, were allowed into the United States to harvest crops. Hundreds of thousands of braceros entered the United States on a short-term basis between 1942 and 1947. When their employment was ended, the braceros were expected to return to Mexico. However, many remained in the United States illegally. In addition, hundreds of thousands of Mexicans entered the country illegally to escape poor economic conditions in Mexico.

THE LONGORIA INCIDENT One of the more notorious instances of prejudice against Mexican Americans involved the burial of Felix Longoria. Longoria was a Mexican-American World War II hero who had been killed in the Philippines. The only undertaker in his hometown in Texas refused to provide Longoria’s family with funeral services.

In the wake of the Longoria incident, outraged Mexican Americans stepped up their efforts to stamp out discrimination. In 1948, Mexican-American veterans organized the G.I. Forum. Meanwhile, activist Ignacio Lopez founded the Unity League of California to register Mexican-American voters and to promote candidates who would represent their interests.

NATIVE AMERICANS CONTINUE THEIR STRUGGLE Native Americans also continued to fight for their rights and identity. From the passage of the Dawes Act, in 1887, until 1934, the policy of the federal government toward Native Americans had been one of “Americanization” and assimilation. In 1924, the Snyder Act granted citizenship to all Native Americans, but they remained second-class citizens.

In 1934, the Indian Reorganization Act moved official policy away from assimilation and toward Native American autonomy. Its passage signaled a change in federal policy. In addition, because the government was reeling from
Native Americans like the man above received job training from the Bureau of Indian Affairs to help them settle in urban areas.

**Vocabulary**

subsidizing: financial assistance given by a government to a person or group to support an undertaking regarded as being in the public interest

**Terms & Names**

- **Urban renewal**
- **Bracero**
- **Termination policy**

**Main Idea**

2. **Taking Notes**

In overlapping circles like the ones below, fill in the common problems that African Americans, Mexican Americans, and Native Americans faced during the 1950s.

- **African Americans**
- **Mexican Americans**
- **Native Americans**

What do these problems illustrate about life in the 1950s?

**Critical Thinking**

3. **Evaluating**

Do you think that urban renewal was an effective approach to the housing problem in inner cities? Why or why not? **Think About:**

- the goals of the National Housing Act of 1949
- the claims made by some critics of urban renewal
- the residents’ best interest

4. **Analyzing Issues**

How did Native Americans work to increase their participation in the U.S. political process?

5. **Drawing Conclusions**

Which major population shift—“white flight,” migration from Mexico, or relocation of Native Americans—do you think had the greatest impact on U.S. society? Why? **Think About:**

- the impact of “white flight”
- the influx of “braceros”
- the effects of the termination policy
TERMS & NAMES
For each item below, write a sentence explaining its historical significance in the 1950s.

1. suburb
2. Dixiecrat
3. Fair Deal
4. conglomerate
5. baby boom
6. mass media
7. beat movement
8. rock ‘n’ roll
9. urban renewal
10. bracero

MAIN IDEAS
Use your notes and the information in the chapter to answer the following questions.

Postwar America (pages 634–640)
1. How did the GI Bill of Rights help World War II veterans?
2. What domestic and foreign issues concerned voters during the 1952 presidential election?

The American Dream in the Fifties (pages 641–649)
3. What shift in employment trends had occurred by the mid-1950s?
4. How did life in the suburbs provide the model for the American dream?

Popular Culture (pages 652–657)
5. What strategies did radio stations use to counteract the mass popularity of television?

6. How did African-American performers influence American popular culture in the 1950s?

The Other America (pages 660–663)
7. How did many major cities change in the 1950s?
8. What obstacles to improving their lives did Native Americans face in the 1950s?

CRITICAL THINKING
1. USING YOUR NOTES In a web like the one below, show the postwar technological advances you consider most influential.

2. HYPOTHESIZING During America’s first two centuries, the national character was marked by individualism. Why do you think conformity became the norm in the 1950s?

3. ANALYZING PRIMARY SOURCES Do you agree or disagree with the following quotation from Life magazine on American culture in 1954: “Never before so much for so few”? Support your answer with evidence.

VISUAL SUMMARY

The Postwar Boom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBURBAN GROWTH</th>
<th>POLITICS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Baby boom causes population growth.</td>
<td>• Eisenhower’s presidency brings prosperity and political conservatism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Demand for goods exceeds supply.</td>
<td>• Equal rights remains a problem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Highways and affordable homes make suburban living desirable.</td>
<td>• The Cold War creates fear and anxiety.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LIFE IN POSTWAR AMERICA 1945–1960</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Rock ‘n’ roll and jazz pave the way for minority representation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The beat movement rejects conformity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Recreation and consumerism flourish.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Television portrays an idealized white America.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Urban areas fall into decay.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Minorities experience prejudice and discrimination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Minorities establish organizations to improve civil rights.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Use the chart and your knowledge of U.S. history to answer questions 1 and 2.

### Geographic Distribution of U.S. Population, 1930–1970

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Central Cities</th>
<th>Suburbs</th>
<th>Rural Areas and Small Towns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>31.8%</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
<td>50.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>31.6%</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
<td>48.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>32.3%</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
<td>43.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>32.6%</td>
<td>30.7%</td>
<td>36.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>31.4%</td>
<td>37.6%</td>
<td>31.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from U.S. Bureau of the Census, Decennial Censuses, 1930–1970

1. Which of the following statements supports the information in the chart?
   
   A. From 1940–1960, more people lived in cities than in rural areas.
   
   B. In 1960, twice as many people lived in cities as in suburbs.
   
   C. By 1960, suburbs had surpassed cities in total population.
   
   D. From 1930–1970, the percentage of U.S. population in rural areas decreased every decade.

2. From 1940–1970 the distribution doubled —
   
   F. in cities and suburbs.
   
   G. only in suburbs.
   
   H. only in cities.
   
   J. only in rural areas.

Use the song lyric below and your knowledge of U.S. history to answer question 3.

**“Little Boxes”**

Little boxes on the hillside,
Little boxes made of ticky-tacky,
Little boxes on the hillside,
Little boxes all the same.

There’s a pink one and a green one
And a blue one and a yellow one,
And they’re all made out of ticky-tacky
And they all look just the same.

—Malvina Reynolds

3. This popular song of the era describes —

   A. planned obsolescence.
   
   B. urban renewal.
   
   C. suburban communities.
   
   D. beatnik lifestyle.

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**INTERACT WITH HISTORY**

Think about the issues you explored at the beginning of the chapter. Suppose you are a beat poet and have been asked to write an original poem entitled *A Postwar American Dream*. Use information from Chapter 19 and your knowledge of American history to support your poem. Remember to include a wide range of lifestyles in your poem.

**FOCUS ON WRITING**

In 1956, President Eisenhower signed the Interstate Highway Act that led to the construction of a nationwide highway network. Write a persuasive essay supporting the law. In the first part of your essay, clearly outline the benefits created by the law. In the second part of your essay, address the concerns of those who oppose the law.

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**MULTIMEDIA ACTIVITY**

Visit the links for Chapter Assessment to plan and prepare a Web page about one aspect of popular culture—music, television, fashion, or the movies—from the 1950s. Include particular events and personalities of that period.

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The Postwar Boom 665