Chapter 19: The Postwar Boom

1946–1960

Examine the Issues

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.

What is the American dream of the 1950s?

- 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?
Postwar America experiences an economic boom fueled by consumer spending that is spurred by the mass media, especially by television.

But many find themselves mired in poverty and stifled by discrimination.
Section 1: Postwar America

Chapter 19: The Postwar Boom

Objectives:
- Identify economic and social problems America faced after World War II
- Explain how the desire for stability led to political conservatism
- Describe causes and effects of social unrest in the postwar period
- Contrast domestic policy under Presidents Truman and Eisenhower
Postwar America

- The Truman and Eisenhower administrations led the nation to make social, economic, and political adjustments following World War II.
- In the years after World War II, the United States became the economic and military power that it still is today.

Terms and Names:
- GI Bill of Rights
- Suburb
- Harry S. Truman’s positive attributes
- Dixiecrat and 1948 election
- Fair Deal
- Nixon and the “Checkers” speech
Worksheet

- Students group up and work on Section 1 of Chapter 19 study guide.

Section 2: The American Dream in the 1950s

Chapter 19: The Postwar Boom
The American Dream in the 1950s

- Objectives:
  - Explain how changes in business affected workers
  - Describe the suburban lifestyle of the 1950s
  - Identify causes and effects of the boom in the automobile industry
  - Explain the increase in consumerism in the 1950s

During the 1950s, the economy boomed, and many Americans enjoyed material comfort
- The “American Dream”, a notion that was shaped by the 1950s, is still pursued today
The American Dream in the 1950s

- Terms and Names:
  - Conglomerate
  - Franchise
  - Baby Boom
  - Dr. Jonas Salk
  - Dr. Benjamin Spock
  - Betty Friedan
  - Consumerism
  - Planned Obsolescence

Think about this...

- What does the American Dream mean to you?
- Do you think your dreams are different from those of your parents?
- Your grandparents?
Employment in the U.S.:
- By 1956, the majority of Americans were no longer working in blue-collar (industrial) jobs
- More were in high-paying, white-collar (office, professional) positions
- Many were also in service jobs like sales, advertising, insurance, communications

Conglomerates:
- Conglomerates—corporations that own smaller, unrelated companies
  - In the 1950s, the International Telephone and Telegraph (ITT) owned car rental companies, insurance companies, hotels and motels
  - The purpose is to diversify to protect themselves from downturns in individual industries
  - Can you name a modern conglomerate?
Trump Organization started as a family business led by Fred Trump in 1934 and was expanded into a conglomerate by Donald J. Trump in 1980s as the umbrella company for all of his real estate operations and corporate affiliates. In addition to the numerous luxury residential real estate developments in New York City, the Trump Organization also holds superior office buildings, hotels, casinos, golf courses, recreational facilities, a modeling and talent agency and an international beauty pageant organization. In 2003, the Trump Organization's sales record is approximately $8.5 billion.

Franchises:
- Franchises—company offers similar products and services in many places
  - Also sell the right to private individuals to use the company name and system
- Fast-food restaurants among the first and most successful franchises
Social Conformity:
- Like McDonald’s food, people soon found that they too were losing their individuality
- Companies don’t want people to rock the corporate boat, so they create “company people” (term coined by William Whyte in his book *The Organization Man*)
  - They are given personality tests to see if they fit in the corporate culture
  - Companies reward teamwork, loyalty, encourage conformity
The Suburban Lifestyle

› The American Dream:
  ◦ In the 1950s, the suburbs embodied the American dream of an affordable house, good schools, a safe place to raise children, easy to get along with neighbors that were like themselves

The Suburban Lifestyle

› The Baby Boom:
  ◦ 1950s–85% of new homes built in the suburbs
  ◦ 1945–1965 **baby boom**—soaring birth rate after soldiers return
  ◦ Peaks in 1957
  ◦ Factors:
    • Reunion of husbands and wives
    • Decreasing marriage age
    • Desirability of large families
    • Confidence in economy
    • Advances in medicine
The Suburban Lifestyle

Advances in Medicine and Childcare:
- New drugs fight and prevent childhood diseases
- Dr. Jonas Salk develops and vaccine for polio
- Pediatrician Dr. Benjamin Spock writes a popular guide for parents
- Baby boom impacts the economy and the educational system

The Suburban Lifestyle

Women’s Roles:
- Popular magazines and TV programs glorified the role of the homemaker and mother
- A survey taken in the 1950s found that more than one-fifth of suburban wives were dissatisfied with their lives
- In the 1950s women:
  - Careers limited to female oriented roles—nursing, teaching, office support
  - These jobs paid less than traditional male-oriented
  - Pay for women was less than men earned for comparable work
  - Although more women were attending four-year colleges, they received little financial, academic, or emotional encouragement to pursue goals
The Suburban Lifestyle

- **Women’s Roles:**
  - *The Feminine Mystique*—book authored by Betty Friedan described 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”

  - What is Freidan trying to say?

- **Leisure in the Fifties:**
  - Americans in the 1950s had more leisure time than ever before
  - People have shorter work week, paid vacation, time-saving gadgets freeing up time
  - People have more time for recreational activities, spectator sports boom
  - Book, magazine, comic book sales climb quickly
The Automobile Culture

- **Automania:**
  - Gas rationing was eliminated after World War II leading to cheap, plentiful gas
  - Because of easy credit and good advertising, car sales rise dramatically between 1950 and 1955
  - Additionally, since there was no public transit in the suburbs, cars were necessary to get to work, etc.

- **The Interstate Highway System:**
  - Local and state roads like Route 66 linked cities, suburbs to school, shops, work
  - Eisenhower signs Interstate Highway Act in 1956
  - Highways enable long-haul trucking, growth of new towns and ease of family vacations
  - Towns near highways prosper while those near older, smaller roads decline
    - Example—Mantua and Streetsboro
The Automobile Culture

- Mobility Takes Its Toll:
  - The auto boom stimulates related businesses
    - Drive-in movies, restaurants, shopping malls
  - Cars create social and environmental problems
    - Accidents, pollution, traffic stress
  - Upper and middle class whites leave cities—jobs and businesses follow
  - Public transportation declines, poor in inner cities lose jobs and access to vital services
  - Economic gulf between suburban and urban
    - Widens gulf between middle class and poor

Consumerism Unbound

- New Products:
  - By mid 1950s, 60% of Americans in middle class—twice as many as during WWII
  - **Consumerism** (buying material goods) is equated with success
  - Numerous new products appear on the market in respond to demand → more leisure time

- Planned Obsolescence:
  - **Planned Obsolescence**—making products that get outdated, wear out quickly—makes consumers buy or want to buy new ones
Consumerism Unbound

- **Buy Now, Pay Later:**
  - Credit purchases, credit cards (Diner's Club 1950, American Express 1958), installments extend payment period
  - Private debt balloons during 1950s from $73billion to $179billion

- **The Advertising Age:**
  - Manufacturers use professional ad men
  - Most people have satisfied basic needs, advertising encourages extra spending
  - Psychological appeals manipulates consumers to particular products
  - Ads appear in all media, TV emerges as a powerful new tool

Review Vocab

- **Terms and Names:**
  - Conglomerate
  - Franchise
  - Baby Boom
  - Dr. Jonas Salk
  - Dr. Benjamin Spock
  - Betty Friedan
  - Consumerism
  - Planned Obsolescence
Worksheet

- Students pair up and work on Section 1 & 2 of Chapter 19 study guide.

American Graffiti

- One of the most influential of all teen films, American Graffiti is a funny, nostalgic, and bittersweet look at a group of recent high school grads’ last days of innocence.
- American Graffiti became the third most popular movie of 1973 (after The Exorcist and The Sting), establishing the reputations of Lucas (whose next film would be Star Wars) and his young cast, and furthering the onset of soundtrack-driven, youth-oriented movies. Although the film helped spark 1970s nostalgia for the 1950s, nothing else would capture the flavor of the era with the same humorous candor and latent sense of foreboding.
Section 3: The Cold War at Home

Chapter 18: Cold War Conflicts

Objectives

1. **Describe** government efforts to investigate the loyalty of U.S. citizens
2. **Explain** the spy cases of Alger Hiss and Ethel and Julius Rosenberg
3. **Describe** the efforts of Senator Joseph McCarthy to investigate alleged Communist influence in the United States
The Cold War at Home

- Terms and Names:
  - HUAC
  - Hollywood Ten
  - Blacklist
  - Alger Hiss
  - Paul Robeson
  - Joseph McCarthy
  - Ethel and Julius Rosenberg
  - McCarran Act
  - Loyalty Review Board
  - McCarthyism

Have you ever...?

- Been put in a situation in which your guilt, rather than your innocence, is presumed and the burden is upon you to prove yourselves innocent?
- Consider the power of the smear campaign, where it is difficult to prove the truth once a lie has been spread about a person
Fear of Communist Influence

- **American Sentiments:**
  - Communist takeover of Eastern Europe and China fuel fear of its spread
  - At the height of World War II, 100,000 Americans claimed they were members of the Communist Party

- **Loyalty Review Board:**
  - Truman is accused by Republicans of being soft on communism
  - In 1947, he sets up the *Loyalty Review Board* to investigate government employees
  - Between 1947 and 1951, the Loyalty Board investigates 3.2 million employees and fired 212
    - Another 2,900 quit because they felt their constitutional rights were being violated

**Fear of Communist Influence**

- **The House Un–American Activities Committee:**
  - *House Un–American Activities Committee (HUAC)* investigates Communist ties
  - HUAC makes headlines in 1947 when they investigate the Hollywood movie industry
  - The *Hollywood Ten* refuse to testify and are sent to prison
  - Fearing trouble, Hollywood execs *blacklist* people with Communist ties and they can’t get work
Fear of Communist Influence

- Paul Robeson:
  - Read the Historical Spotlight on Paul Robeson on page 617 of your text

Fear of Communist Influence

- The McCarran Act:
  - Fearing Truman wasn’t doing enough, Congress passes the **McCarran Act**—making it illegal to plan any action that might lead to a totalitarian dictatorship
  - Truman vetoes stating that in America we don’t punish people for having opinions
  - Congress overrides the veto
Spy Cases Stun the Nation

**Alger Hiss:**
- *Alger Hiss* was accused of spying for the Soviet Union by a former Soviet spy.
- While evidence against him was weak, he was convicted of perjury.
- The high profile case was pursued by young congressman Richard Nixon.
  - Within four years Nixon was vice president.

**The Rosenbergs:**
- In 1949, the U.S. public is shocked when it discovers that Soviets had detonated an atomic bomb.
- Many begin to wonder if communist supporters had sold secrets.
- Physicist Klaus Fuchs admits giving info.
- *Ethel and Julius Rosenberg*—minor Communist Party activists, are implicated.
- Rosenbergs are sentenced to death and Supreme Court upholds conviction.
McCarthy Launches his “Witch Hunt”

- McCarthy’s Tactics:
  - Senator Joseph McCarthy is a strong anti-communist activist
  - Ineffective legislator, needs an issue to win reelection
  - McCarthyism—attacking suspected Communists without evidence
    - It is a term coined even today for the act of accusing someone of something without evidence
  - McCarthy claims he has names of Communists in the State Department—no evidence
  - Few Republicans spoke out because they believed he had the winning strategy for the 1952 presidential election

- McCarthy’s Downfall:
  - In 1954, McCarthy makes false accusations about the U.S. Army
  - Televised hearing shows him bullying witnesses
  - Loses public support, Senate condemns him of improper conduct
  - Three years later, McCarthy, suffering from alcoholism, dies a broken man
  - During the Army trial, McCarthy was shouted down by Army attorney Joseph Welch
McCarthy Launches his “Witch Hunt”

- McCarthy also had a very public fight with legendary television journalist Edward R. Murrow.

Other Anti-Communist Measures:
- By 1953, 39 states and many towns pass laws to forbid speech favoring the violent overthrow of the government.
- Millions are forced to take loyalty oaths and many are investigated.
- People become afraid to speak out on public issues.
Review Vocab

- Terms and Names:
  - HUAC
  - Hollywood Ten
  - Blacklist
  - Alger Hiss
  - Paul Robeson
  - Joseph McCarthy
  - Ethel and Julius Rosenberg
  - McCarran Act
  - Loyalty Review Board
  - McCarthyism

Worksheet

- Students pair up and work on Section 3 of Chapter 18 study guide.

Finney’s tale of an alien invasion of a small California town by pod-people that replicate and replace its citizens would seem to be a classic example of America’s fear of Communist invasion and conformity. Many critics view this novel as a work that reflects the dominant cultural attitudes of its day.

Finney does not analyze his culture but transfers his fear of Communism into a story of an alien invasion. Some scholars view the alien invasion as “an obvious displacement of the Soviet threat [which] turn[s] on the metaphor of communism as pathology” or disease.

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**Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1956)**

- Finney’s tale of an alien invasion of a small California town by pod-people that replicate and replace its citizens would seem to be a classic example of America’s fear of Communist invasion and conformity.
- Many critics view this novel as a work that reflects the dominant cultural attitudes of its day.
- Finney does not analyze his culture but transfers his fear of Communism into a story of an alien invasion.
- Some scholars view the alien invasion as “an obvious displacement of the Soviet threat [which] turn[s] on the metaphor of communism as pathology” or disease.

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**Section 4: Two Nations Live on the Edge**
Objectives

1. Explain the policy of brinksmanship
2. Describe American and Soviet actions that caused the Cold War to spread around the world
3. Summarize the impact of Sputnik and the U-2 incident on the United States

Duck and Cover!
Two Nations Live on the Edge

- Terms and Names:
  - H-bomb
  - Dwight D. Eisenhower
  - John Foster Dulles
  - Brinksmanship
  - Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)
  - Warsaw Pact
  - Eisenhower Doctrine
  - Nikita Khrushchev
  - Francis Gary Powers
  - U-2 Incident

Brinksmanship Rules U.S. Policy

- Race for the H-Bomb:
  - When Soviets explode atom bomb in 1949, Truman has to decide to develop an even bigger bomb
  - *H-bomb*—hydrogen bomb—nuclear weapon more powerful than the atom bomb
  - 1952: U.S. detonates H-bomb
  - 1953: Soviets detonate one
Brinkmanship Rules U.S. Policy

› Policy of Brinksmanship:
  ◦ Dwight D. Eisenhower becomes president after Truman and during the height of the Cold War
  ◦ John Foster Dulles is his Secretary of State
  ◦ Proposes policy of brinkmanship—the willingness to go to all out war to prevent spread of communism
  ◦ Thermo-nuclear threat is greater than ever before
    • Millions can die
    • Nation prepares by practicing air-raid procedures, many others build bomb shelters

The Cold War Spreads Around the World

› Covert Actions in the Middle East and Latin America:
  ◦ Newly-formed Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)—uses spies to gather information
  ◦ In Iran, the CIA helps oust the prime minister for fear he may turn to Soviets for help after British stopped buying Iranian oil
    • They put in place a pro-American Shah
  ◦ In Guatemala, the CIA helps oust the president after he gave land to peasants
    • Guatemalan army leader becomes president
The Cold War Spreads Around the World

- The Warsaw Pact:
  - U.S.–Soviet relations thaw a bit after Stalin’s death in 1953
  - West Germany is allowed to rearm and joins NATO
  - This scares the Soviets, so they form the **Warsaw Pact**—military alliance with 7 Eastern European countries

  - Using map handout, label European countries and color countries in NATO and Warsaw Pact alliances, as well as neutral countries. Use map on page 624 of your text for reference

- A Summit in Geneva:
  - Eisenhower meets Soviets in Geneva, proposes “open skies” policy to allow flights over each other to keep eye on nukes
  - Soviets reject the proposal, but world hails the “spirit of Geneva” as step towards peace
The Cold War Spreads Around the World

- The Suez War:
  - In 1955, U.S. and Great Britain agree to help build Aswan Dam in Egypt
  - Egypt’s leader Gamal Abdel-Nasser plays U.S. and Soviets for more aid
  - Dulles withdraws loan offer, Nasser responds by nationalizing Suez Canal (owned by France and Great Britain)
  - Israel, Britain and France send troops—UN intervenes
  - Fighting stops, Egypt keeps canal, others withdraw

- The Eisenhower Doctrine:
  - Soviet prestige in Middle East rises because of support for Egypt
  - Eisenhower Doctrine—in 1957, says U.S. will defend any Middle East country against Soviet Invasion

The Cold War Spreads Around the World

- The Hungarian Uprising:
  - In 1956, Hungarians revolt against communist rule, call for democratic government
  - Popular liberal Communist leader, Imre Nagy, creates government, promises elections
  - Soviet tanks quickly roll in, fighting Hungarians in streets, capturing and executing Nagy
  - Despite Truman Doctrine, U.S. does nothing to help Soviet satellites, Soviets also vetoed any action by the UN
The Cold War Takes to the Skies

- A New Soviet Leader:
  - **Nikita Khrushchev** emerges as new Soviet leader
  - Favors peaceful coexistence and economic, scientific competition

The Space Race:
- October 1957, Soviets launch Sputnik, first artificial satellite
- Shocked Americans pour money into own space program
The Cold War Takes to the Skies

- **A U–2 is Shot Down:**
  - CIA makes secret high-altitude flights with U–2 planes to spy on Soviets
  - Eisenhower wants the flights discontinued before summit with Khrushchev
  - *Francis Gary Powers* is shot down on last flight over Soviet territory

- **Renewed Confrontation:**
  - Eisenhower at first denies, then concedes U–2 was spying
  - Agrees to stop flights, but refuses to apologize to Khrushchev
  - *U–2 incident* renews tensions between superpowers; summit is cancelled

Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb (1964)

- *Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb*, commonly known as *Dr. Strangelove*, is a 1964 black comedy film which satirizes the fear of nuclear war in the 1960s. It was directed, produced, and co-written by Stanley Kubrick and starred Peter Sellers and George C. Scott. The film is loosely based on Peter George’s Cold War thriller novel *Red Alert*. The story concerns a crazy U.S. Air Force general who orders a nuclear attack on the Soviet Union. It follows the President of the United States and his advisors as they try to recall the bombers to prevent a nuclear apocalypse. It separately follows the crew of one of the B–52 bombers as they try to launch the bomb over Soviet territory.

- The film is often ranked by critics and directors amongst the greatest comedies of all time, and was selected for preservation in the United States National Film Registry. In 2000, readers of “Total Film” magazine voted it the 24th greatest comedy film of all time. As of July 2012, it ranked the 35th greatest film of all time at the Internet Movie Database. Movie critic Roger Ebert said the movie is “arguably the best political satire of the century.” In 1989, the United States Library of Congress deemed the film “culturally significant” and selected it for preservation in the National Film Registry. It was listed as number three on the American Film Institute’s 100 Years...100 Laughs list.
Worksheet

- Students pair up and work on Section 4 of Chapter 17 study guide.

Chapter Review

- Let’s review!
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