CHAPTER 29

America at Midcentury, 1945–1960

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After you have studied Chapter 29 in your textbook and worked through this study guide chapter, you should be able to:

1. Examine the domestic issues that faced the United States during the immediate postwar period; explain the federal government’s actions concerning those issues; and discuss the consequences of those actions.

2. Discuss the reasons for and explain the consequences of the postwar baby boom.

3. Examine the forces that caused the growth of the suburbs in the period from 1945 to 1960, and discuss the characteristics of life in the suburbs.

4. Examine the issues and personalities and explain the outcome of the 1948 presidential election.

5. Discuss the goals of Truman’s Fair Deal and explain Truman’s successes and failures in achieving those goals.

6. Discuss the domestic issues facing the Eisenhower administration; explain and evaluate the administration’s handling of those issues; and discuss the consequences of those actions.

7. Discuss the 1950s as an age of consensus and conformity, and explain the beliefs associated with this consensus mood.

8. Discuss the combination of forces and incidents that caused the postwar wave of anti-Communist hysteria, and examine the various ways in which this hysteria manifested itself.

9. Explain Senator Joseph McCarthy’s rise to power and his ultimate decline, and discuss the impact of the postwar wave of anti-Communist hysteria on American society.

10. Discuss the gains of African Americans during the late 1940s and early 1950s, and examine the factors responsible for those gains.

11. Examine the reinvigoration of the civil rights movement during the 1950s; discuss the response of white southerners and of the federal government to the demands and actions of African Americans; and explain the extent to which African Americans were successful in achieving their goals.

12. Examine the factors that contributed to the postwar economic boom experienced in American society during the 1950s.

13. Discuss the characteristics of and trends within the labor movement from 1945 to 1960.

14. Discuss the forces that contributed to the growth of the Sunbelt during the 1950s and examine the consequences of that growth.

15. Examine the factors that contributed to the emergence of a national, middle-class culture during the 1950s and discuss the characteristics of that culture.
16. Discuss the growth of organized religion in American society during the 1950s.

17. Discuss characteristics of the American family during the 1950s, and examine the factors that affected the life choices of men and women.

18. Discuss American concepts about sex during the 1950s and explain the challenges that arose to those concepts.

19. Examine the factors that caused the emergence of a distinctive youth culture in America during the 1950s and discuss the characteristics of that culture.

20. Discuss and assess the criticisms leveled against the middle-class culture of the 1950s.

21. Discuss the impact of the postwar economic boom on the environment.

22. Examine the reasons for, extent of, and effects of poverty in America during the postwar era, and discuss the characteristics of the poor.

THEMATIC GUIDE

After the Second World War, the United States experienced an uneasy and troubled transition to peace. Although the unemployment and higher education benefits of the GI Bill were intended, in part, to ease this transition by allowing veterans to be eased into civilian employment, those benefits did not affect the skyrocketing inflation rate and did not prevent a rash of strikes. Despite the fact that the Truman administration’s handling of those problems led to widespread public discontent and to Republican victory in the 1946 congressional elections, to the surprise of most analysts, Truman won the presidential election of 1948. Furthermore, even though the transition to a peacetime economy was rocky at first, the economy quickly recovered and, as a result of consumer spending, increased agricultural productivity, and government programs, the United States entered an era of sustained economic growth and prosperity. One of the consequences of this prosperity was the “baby boom,” which fueled more economic growth.

During the 1950s, white Americans increasingly fled from the cities to the suburbs. Drawn to the suburbs by many factors, life in suburbia was often made possible by government policies that extended economic aid to families making such a move. Unfortunately, these federal policies did not benefit all Americans equally. As a result, nonwhites were often denied the opportunities offered to white Americans. Federal, state, and local expenditures on highway construction also spurred the growth of suburbia by allowing workers to live farther from their jobs in central cities. Although suburbia had its critics, most Americans seemed to prefer the lifestyle it offered.

During Truman’s first elected term (1949–1953), he and the American people had to contend with the domestic consequences of the Korean War. Although the war brought prosperity, it also brought inflation and increased defense spending at the expense of the domestic programs of Truman’s Fair Deal. Furthermore, both the nature and length of the Korean War led to disillusionment and discontent on the part of many Americans. These factors, coupled with reports of influence peddling in the Truman administration, caused the President’s approval rating to plummet and led to a Republican triumph in the presidential and congressional elections of 1952.

Upon coming to the presidency in 1953, Dwight D. Eisenhower, a moderate Republican, decided against attempting to dismantle New Deal and Fair Deal programs and adopted the philosophy of “dynamic conservatism.” Eisenhower meant by this that he was “conservative when it comes to money and liberal when it comes to human beings.” While Eisenhower’s expansion of the Social Security System was on the liberal side of this philosophy, the increased government funding for education during his administration was, as pointed out by the authors of the text, more a reaction to Cold War pressures than from a liberal frame of reference. The pro-business nature of the Eisenhower administration and Eisenhower’s belief that government should actively promote economic
development may be seen in the president’s tax reform program and the Atomic Energy Act. Despite Eisenhower’s fiscal conservatism, the administration’s activist foreign policy and three domestic economic recessions caused increased federal expenditures, decreased tax revenues, and deficit spending. As a result, Eisenhower oversaw only three balanced budgets during his eight years in office.

During this “age of consensus”—a period in which Americans agreed on their stance against communism and their faith in economic progress—many people, believing in the rightness of the American system, viewed reform and reformers in a negative light and saw conflict as the product of psychologically disturbed individuals, not as the product of societal ills. It is within this “consensus” context that, during the late 1940s and early 1950s, the United States witnessed a wave of anti-Communist hysteria. The tracing of events from the “Verona project” to Truman’s loyalty probe to the “Hollywood Ten” supports the view that fear of communism, long present in American society, intensified during the postwar years. Within this climate of fear and suspicion, Joseph McCarthy began his demagogic anticommunist crusade and, in the process, lent his name to a state of mind that existed before he entered the scene. McCarthyism was further sustained by events, and as Americans pointed accusing fingers at each other, public figures found it difficult to stand against McCarthy’s tactics. As a result, liberals and conservatives shared in consensus on anticommunism, as can be seen in the passage of the Internal Security Act and the Communist Control Act. Moreover, since respected public figures such as President Eisenhower chose to avoid direct confrontation with Senator McCarthy, McCarthy continued to add more victims to his list of alleged subversives and continued to jeopardize freedom of speech and expression. Ultimately, McCarthyism declined, with McCarthy himself being largely responsible for his own demise.

One group that challenged the consensus mood of the age was African Americans. Under Truman, the federal government, for the first time since Reconstruction, accepted responsibility for guaranteeing equality under the law—civil rights—to African Americans. Furthermore, work by the NAACP and decisions by the Supreme Court resulted in a slow erosion of the separate-but-equal doctrine and of black disfranchisement in the South. Then the Supreme Court’s historic decision in Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka gave African Americans reason to believe that their long struggle against racism was beginning to pay off. However, white southerners reacted with hostility to that decision and actively resisted Court-ordered desegregation. This resistance led to the crisis in Little Rock, Arkansas, a crisis in which Eisenhower felt compelled to use federal troops to prevent violence in the desegregation of the city’s public schools. But the Little Rock crisis was merely the tip of an emerging civil rights movement, as can be seen through the discussion of the Montgomery bus boycott, the formation of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and criticism concerning the ineffectiveness of the Civil Rights Act of 1957.

As many white middle-class Americans made more money, bought more goods, and created more waste, they also continued a mass migration to the Sunbelt that had begun during the war. In addition, a national, middle-class culture began to emerge, and many who were part of this culture were instructed in what behaviors were proper and expected of them through the national mass media, especially television. As Americans sought pleasure through the materialistic values of the era, they were also, paradoxically, drawn to organized religion in unprecedented numbers.

The postwar economic boom also affected the family. The changes it brought included the influence of Dr. Benjamin Spock on the parent-child relationship and the conflicting and changing roles of women as more entered the labor market. While society continued to stress the importance of “proper” female roles, attention was also directed to the “crisis of masculinity,” and, therefore, to the plight of the American male.

After a discussion of the influence of the pioneering work of Dr. Alfred Kinsey in the late 1940s and early 1950s on American attitudes toward sexual behavior, we look at the emergence of a distinctive
youth culture, the birth of rock 'n' roll, the fads of the era, and the critiques of American society offered by those who criticized the conformity of the age.

Economic growth inspired by government defense spending and by the growth of a more affluent population demanding more consumer goods and larger quantities of agricultural products had a negative impact on the environment. Automobiles and factories polluted the air. Human and industrial waste polluted rivers, lakes, and streams. Pesticides endangered wildlife and humans alike, as did the waste from nuclear processing plants. Disposable products marketed as conveniences made America a “throw-away society.”

Prosperity did not bring about a meaningful redistribution of income in American society during the period under study. Therefore, many Americans (about 25 percent in 1962) lived in poverty. As before, the poor congregated in urban areas. African Americans, poor whites, Puerto Ricans, Mexican Americans, and Native Americans continued their movement to low-income inner-city housing, while the more affluent city residents—mostly whites—continued their exodus to the suburbs. Although low-interest government housing loans made life in suburbia possible for many middle-class whites, government programs such as “urban renewal” often hurt the urban poor. Furthermore, the trend toward bigness in American agriculture continued and presented more of a threat than ever to the family farm. The growth of agribusiness pushed many small farmers and tenant farmers off the land, which in turn swelled the ranks of the urban poor. Unfortunately, the burgeoning middle class often turned a blind eye to the poverty around them.

BUILDING VOCABULARY

Listed below are important words and terms that you need to know to get the most out of Chapter 29. They are listed in the order in which they occur in the chapter. After carefully looking through the list, (1) underline the words with which you are totally unfamiliar, (2) put a question mark by those words of which you are unsure, and (3) leave the rest alone.

As you begin to read the chapter, when you come to any of the words you’ve put question marks beside or underlined (1) slow your reading; (2) focus on the word and on its context in the sentence you’re reading; (3) if you can understand the meaning of the word from its context in the sentence or passage in which it is used, go on with your reading; (4) if it’s a word that you’ve underlined or a word that you can’t understand from its context in the sentence or passage, look it up in a dictionary and write down the definition that best applies to the context in which the word is used.

Definitions

homogeneity ____________________________
circumscribe __________________________
stymie _________________________________
flout _________________________________
conglomerate __________________________
cohort ________________________________
impass _______________________________
burgeoning ____________________________
fruition ________________________________
filibuster _______________________________
syntact 
unabashed 
prudent 
nadir 
malign 
sully 
virulent 
resurgence 
tacitly 
exuberance 
utilitarian 
ostracize 
bland 
scrutiny 
elitist 
marginalize 
decrepit 
entice 

Difficult-to-Spell Names and Terms from Reading and Lecture
IDENTIFICATION AND SIGNIFICANCE
After studying Chapter 29 of *A People and a Nation*, you should be able to identify fully and explain the historical significance of each item listed below.

- Identify each item in the space provided. Give an explanation or description of the item. Answer the questions *who, what, where, and when*.
- Explain the historical significance of each item in the space provided. Establish the historical context in which the item exists. Establish the item as the result of or as the cause of other factors existing in the society under study. Answer this question: *What were the political, social, economic, and/or cultural consequences of this item?*

1. G.I. Bill of Rights
   a. Identification

      b. Significance

2. Full Employment Act
   a. Identification

      b. Significance

3. Council of Economic Advisors
   a. Identification

      b. Significance

4. postwar inflation
   a. Identification

      b. Significance
5. the threatened railroad strike of 1946
   a. Identification
   b. Significance

6. the Taft-Hartley Act
   a. Identification
   b. Significance

7. the baby boom
   a. Identification
   b. Significance

8. post-World War II suburbanization
   a. Identification
   b. Significance

9. William Levitt
   a. Identification
   b. Significance
10. the Highway Act of 1956
   a. Identification
   b. Significance

11. the practice of redlining
   a. Identification
   b. Significance

12. Harry S Truman
   a. Identification
   b. Significance

13. Roosevelt’s “Second Bill of Rights”
   a. Identification
   b. Significance

14. the Progressive party
   a. Identification
   b. Significance
15. the Dixiecrats
   a. Identification

   b. Significance

16. the presidential campaign and election of 1948
   a. Identification

   b. Significance

17. the Fair Deal
   a. Identification

   b. Significance

18. Dwight D. Eisenhower
   a. Identification

   b. Significance

19. dynamic conservatism
   a. Identification

   b. Significance
20. Sputnik
   a. Identification
   b. Significance

21. the National Defense Education Act of 1957
   a. Identification
   b. Significance

22. the Atomic Energy Act of 1954
   a. Identification
   b. Significance

23. the military-industrial complex
   a. Identification
   b. Significance

24. the vital center
   a. Identification
   b. Significance
25. the era of consensus
   a. Identification

   b. Significance

26. the Verona project
   a. Identification

   b. Significance

27. the atomic civil defense program
   a. Identification

   b. Significance

28. red baiting
   a. Identification

   b. Significance

29. Truman’s loyalty program (Employee Loyalty Program)
   a. Identification

   b. Significance
30. the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC)
   a. Identification

   b. Significance

31. the Hollywood Ten
   a. Identification

   b. Significance

32. Senator Joseph McCarthy
   a. Identification

   b. Significance

33. the Internal Security Act of 1950 (McCarran Act)
   a. Identification

   b. Significance

34. the Communist Control Act of 1954
   a. Identification

   b. Significance
35. the Alger Hiss case
   a. Identification

   b. Significance

36. Ethel and Julius Rosenberg
   a. Identification

   b. Significance

37. the Army-McCarthy hearings
   a. Identification

   b. Significance

38. To Secure These Rights
   a. Identification

   b. Significance

39. Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services
   a. Identification

   b. Significance
40. the NAACP’s Legal Defense and Education Fund
   a. Identification

   b. Significance

41. *Smith v. Allwright* and *Morgan v. Virginia*
   a. Identification

   b. Significance

42. *Shelly v. Kramer*
   a. Identification

   b. Significance

43. *An American Dilemma*, *Native Son*, and *Black Boy*
   a. Identification

   b. Significance

44. Jackie Robinson
   a. Identification

   b. Significance
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Identification</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>a. Identification</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>b. Significance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Emmett Till</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>a. Identification</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>b. Significance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>White Citizens Councils</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>a. Identification</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>b. Significance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>the Little Rock crisis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>a. Identification</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>b. Significance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Rosa Parks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>a. Identification</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>b. Significance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
50. Martin Luther King, Jr.
   a. Identification

   b. Significance

51. the Montgomery Bus Boycott
   a. Identification

   b. Significance

52. the Southern Christian Leadership Conference
   a. Identification

   b. Significance

53. the Civil Rights Act of 1957
   a. Identification

   b. Significance

   a. Identification

   b. Significance
55. the growth of the Sunbelt
   a. Identification
   b. Significance

56. the transistor
   a. Identification
   b. Significance

57. the emergence of a national middle class culture
   a. Identification
   b. Significance

58. television
   a. Identification
   b. Significance

59. the “middle-classness” of television programming
   a. Identification
   b. Significance
60. the consumer culture
   a. Identification
   b. Significance

61. the post-World War II religious revival
   a. Identification
   b. Significance

62. gender roles in families of the 1950s
   a. Identification
   b. Significance

63. Dr. Spock
   a. Identification
   b. Significance

64. *Modern Woman: The Lost Sex*
   a. Identification
   b. Significance
65. the “crisis of masculinity”
   a. Identification
   b. Significance

66. William H. Whyte
   a. Identification
   b. Significance

67. Dr. Alfred Kinsey
   a. Identification
   b. Significance

68. Hugh Hefner
   a. Identification
   b. Significance

69. the “youth culture”
   a. Identification
   b. Significance
70. Slinky, Mr. Potato Head, and Davy Crockett
   a. Identification
   
   b. Significance

71. rock ‘n’ roll
   a. Identification
   
   b. Significance

72. Elvis Presley
   a. Identification
   
   b. Significance

73. the 1950s upsurge in juvenile delinquency
   a. Identification
   
   b. Significance

74. the critics of 1950s conformity
   a. Identification
   
   b. Significance
75. the environmental costs associated with economic growth
   a. Identification

   b. Significance

76. planned obsolescence
   a. Identification

   b. Significance

77. *Silent Spring*
   a. Identification

   b. Significance

78. urban and rural poverty of the 1950s
   a. Identification

   b. Significance

79. the National Housing Act of 1949
   a. Identification

   b. Significance
80. 1950s growth of agribusiness
   a. Identification

   b. Significance

81. Eisenhower’s termination policy
   a. Identification

   b. Significance
### Chart A

#### Mid-Century Presidencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Means of Assuming Office/Character of Election (campaign styles, closeness, etc.)</th>
<th>Truman 1945–1953</th>
<th>Eisenhower 1953–1961</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President’s Political Philosophy and Goals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actions Reflecting President’s Own Position in His Party (left, center, right)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact of President’s Actions on His Party’s Traditional Power Base, Coalitions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Features of Economy During President’s Time in Office</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efforts Made to Protect or Improve the Domestic Economy (actions, outcomes)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>War / Military Involvement or Intervention Abroad</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxes, Spending, Deficits</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relations with Big Business</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relations with Labor and Unions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Rights Movement (president’s attitude and actions)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supreme Court (appointments, rulings)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response to or Exploitation of Cold War (fears of USSR and nuclear war, anti-communism activities)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctrines/ Pronouncements/ Warnings Issued by President</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landmark Events or Activities</td>
<td>Key Figures (initiators, supporters, opponents, responders)</td>
<td>Strategy Involved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Truman Years</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eisenhower Years</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character/Change</td>
<td>Cause</td>
<td>Effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex and Family</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roles of Youth and Peers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inequities in World of Work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media Practices and Influence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Behavior</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Portrait of the 1950s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character/Change</td>
<td>Cause</td>
<td>Effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Economies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial Attitudes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Structure/Perceptions of Class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IDEAS AND DETAILS

Objective 1
1. Which of the following was a consequence of the GI Bill?
   a. Those who took advantage of its educational benefits tended to become more elitist and more provincial in their outlook.
   b. Due to the rapid influx of thousands of veterans into the nation’s colleges and universities, many institutions of higher learning experienced severe economic problems.
   c. By making higher education available to more people, it created social mobility and fostered the emergence of a national, middle-class culture.
   d. It caused the federal debt to mushroom, which in turn led to high interest rates on mortgages and consumer loans.

Objective 2
2. Which of the following is true of the postwar baby boom?
   a. The boom had little impact on the American economy.
   b. The boom was largely due to an increase in the birthrate among immigrants and poor Americans.
   c. Ignorance concerning birth control and family planning was probably the most important reason for the boom.
   d. As the baby-boom generation grew older, it would have an impact over the decades on such things as housing, education, the job market, and retirement funds.

Objectives 1, 5, and 6
3. Which of the following is true of many federal programs during the late 1940s and 1950s?
   a. They led to a significant increase in the number of women receiving college degrees.
   b. They made it much easier for African Americans to obtain loans for mortgages.
   c. They caused resentment among middle-class Americans because they primarily benefited those with incomes below the poverty level.
   d. They were often biased in favor of white males.

Objective 5
4. Why did President Truman score very few successes in the enactment of his legislative agenda?
   a. The conservative nature of Truman’s legislative agenda was out of step with the electorate.
   b. Truman’s proposals to expand social welfare programs were unrealistic in light of declining tax revenues during the late 1940s and early 1950s.
   c. A coalition of Republicans and southern Democrats in Congress prevented passage of many legislative measures put forward by the president.
   d. When Truman refused to support the creation of a national healthcare program, liberal Democratic congressmen sought revenge by defeating his legislative proposals.
Chapter 29: America at Midcentury, 1945–1960

Objective 4
5. Truman won the presidency in 1948, in part, because
   a. the Dixiecrat and Progressive parties threw their support to Truman in the final weeks of the campaign.
   b. the Republican party was seriously divided over domestic issues and could not conduct a unified campaign.
   c. African American voters gave him the edge necessary to carry key northern states.
   d. the electorate believed that the Republican party platform was too liberal.

Objective 7
6. Which of the following was a characteristic of American thought in the 1950s?
   a. A belief that the faults of American society should be publicly debated
   b. A belief that criticism of American society was unpatriotic
   c. An often-expressed fear that Americans could not withstand the pressures of the Cold War world
   d. A belief that people in positions of authority were to be questioned and forced to justify their decisions

Objectives 8 and 9
7. Which of the following contributed to the emergence of McCarthyism?
   a. The use of red baiting by politicians
   b. News of a treaty of alliance between Mexico and the Soviet Union
   c. The rapid increase in Communist party membership
   d. Discovery of a well-formed Communist conspiracy under the leadership of Henry Wallace

Objectives 6, 8, and 9
8. Which of the following is true of the Communist Control Act of 1954?
   a. It provided for the internment of known communists during a national emergency.
   b. It denied employment to communists in defense-related industries.
   c. The act effectively made membership in the Communist Party illegal.
   d. It put all labor unions suspected of communist domination under surveillance.

Objective 10
9. During the post-World War II period, African Americans made gains in their struggle for civil rights because
   a. Congress passed a strong voting rights bill.
   b. Racist practices at home made it more difficult to compete with the Soviet Union for the support of nonaligned nations.
   c. Truman persuaded southern congressmen to support federal laws against lynching and against the poll tax.
   d. Congress took a decisive stand against racist organizations by outlawing the Ku Klux Klan.
Objectives 10 and 11
10. In the Brown decision, the Supreme Court held that
   a. the poll tax was unconstitutional.
   b. segregation in public educational facilities was unconstitutional.
   c. African Americans had benefited from segregated public educational institutions.
   d. racial discrimination in public accommodations was unconstitutional.

Objective 12
11. Which of the following was a reason for the sustained economic growth America experienced during the 1950s?
   a. The rising value of stocks and bonds
   b. The rise in GNP
   c. Consumer spending
   d. The computer

Objective 15
12. Which of the following is true of suburban life during the 1950s?
   a. The suburbs brought together people of diverse backgrounds and helped forge a national, middle class culture.
   b. The child-centered nature of suburban life was the major factor in the decline of juvenile delinquency during the 1950s.
   c. Since most residents of the suburbs were white, these communities were far less diverse than the neighborhoods from which most suburbanites had come.
   d. The satisfying nature of suburban life was one reason for the decrease in the number of married women in the work force during the 1950s.

Objective 19
13. Which of the following was the most important factor in defining youth culture during the 1950s?
   a. Music
   b. Television
   c. Movies
   d. Advertising

Objective 20
14. During the 1950s, books such as The Crack in the Picture Window and The Lonely Crowd
   a. praised rock ‘n’ roll as the music of a revolutionary generation.
   b. repudiated middle class culture and the rise of conformity in American life.
   c. were shallow, juvenile writings that had virtually no long-term significance.
   d. chastised American teenagers for their political complacency and hedonistic lifestyle.

Objectives 6 and 22
15. As a result of the termination policy supported by the Eisenhower administration,
   a. Indian reservations were expanded and Indian culture further protected.
   b. Indians were successfully relocated to urban areas and assimilated into American society.
   c. the impoverished condition of many Indians was made worse.
   d. the federal government agreed to aid Indian reservations in the extraction of natural resources from tribal lands.
ESSAY QUESTIONS

Objectives 2, 12, and 19
1. Discuss the baby boom, and explain its social and economic impact on American society.

Objectives 1, 5, and 10
2. Discuss the Truman administration’s record on civil rights.

Objectives 8 and 9
3. Defend the following statement: “The Cold War heightened anti-Communist fears at home, and by 1950 they reached hysterical proportions. McCarthy did not create this hysteria; he manipulated it to his own advantage.”

Objectives 7, 8, and 9
4. Defend or refute the following statement: “During the 1950s, Americans were confident to the verge of complacency about the perfectibility of American society, anxious to the point of paranoia about the threat of communism.”

Objectives 6, 10, and 11
5. Discuss the reaction of the southern states and the Eisenhower administration to the Brown decision.

Objective 11
6. Discuss the emergence of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., as the leader of the civil rights movement that emerged in the aftermath of the Brown decision and explain Dr. King’s philosophy.

Objectives 10 and 11
7. Discuss the successes and failures of the civil rights movement from the Montgomery bus boycott to the late 1950s.

Objectives 3 and 17
8. Discuss the concept of the American family and American attitudes concerning gender roles during the 1950s and early 1960s.

Objective 17
9. Discuss the following statement: “A reason for woman’s dilemma was the conflicting roles she was expected to fulfill.”

Objective 22
10. Examine the reasons for and the extent of poverty in American society during the 1950s and early 1960s.
ANSWERS

Multiple-Choice Questions

1. c. Correct. Veterans who took advantage of the educational benefits of the GI Bill poured into American colleges and universities during the postwar years. As a result of the education and technical training they received, they experienced increased social mobility because their career choices were broadened. Furthermore, while in college, beneficiaries of the GI Bill were exposed to new ideas, new experiences, and a diversity of peoples from different backgrounds. As a result, they tended to be more open-minded and less provincial which, in turn, contributed to the emergence of a national, middle-class culture. See page 801.

   a. No. Those who took advantage of the educational benefits of the GI Bill were exposed to new ideas, new experiences, and new people from diverse backgrounds. As a result, they tended to become more open-minded and less provincial. See page 801.

   b. No. Despite the fears of some educators, the influx of thousands of veterans into America’s colleges and universities created “a golden age for higher education.” See page 801.

   d. No. The GI Bill was one factor that increased the federal debt during the late 1940s and during the 1950s. However, due to postwar economic growth and prosperity, federal borrowing did not lead to high interest rates on mortgages and consumer loans. See page 801.

2. d. Correct. As is indicated in Sylvia Porter’s quote in the text, the baby-boom generation over the years created a demand for more food, clothing, gadgets, housing, and services. In this sense, the baby-boom generation was a reason for the postwar economic boom. Furthermore, when the baby-boom generation began to reach retirement age, it put a strain on healthcare systems and on retirement funds. See page 801.

   a. No. The number of births exceeded 4 million per year through the 1950s and into the 1960s. All these extra people had a ripple effect throughout the economy. See page 801.

   b. No. The urban middle class, consisting of professionals, white-collar workers, and college graduates, contributed disproportionately to the baby boom. See page 801.

   c. No. Many people having second, third, and fourth children had demonstrated in the past that they knew how to practice birth control, but during the 1950s they chose not to do so. See page 801.
3.  d. Correct. The policies associated with many postwar federal programs usually benefited white men more than women or nonwhites. For example, as a result of the Selective Service Act’s guarantee that veterans would receive priority in postwar employment over war workers, many of the women who had kept the factories running during the war years lost their jobs. Other examples supporting the idea that benefits were distributed unevenly in the postwar years may be found in the text. See pages 802–803.

   a. No. Postwar federal programs that extended educational benefits, such as the GI Bill, were available to veterans, most of whom were males. As a result, these programs did not benefit women wanting to attend college and did not cause an increase in the number of women receiving college degrees. See pages 802–803.

   b. No. Just the opposite happened. Federal loan officers and bankers often saw African Americans as a higher credit risk than whites. As a result, African Americans usually found it more difficult to receive loans for mortgages. See pages 802–803.

   c. No. Federal programs were far more beneficial to middle-class Americans than to low-income Americans. See pages 802–803.

4.  c. Correct. The Republicans who dominated the Eightieth Congress (1947–1949) were joined by conservative southern Democrats in rejecting most of Truman’s legislative proposals. Even after Truman was elected to the presidency in his own right in 1948, a coalition of Republicans and conservative southern Democrats stood against and were able to defeat most of Truman’s proposals. See page 803.

   a. No. Truman’s legislative agenda, which included the Full Employment Act, civil rights legislation, and national health insurance, is considered liberal. See page 803.

   b. No. Federal tax revenues remained fairly constant at around $40 billion per year from 1946 to 1950. Furthermore, in light of the continued growth in the economy during those years Truman’s proposals were rather modest and failure to enact them was due more to the political environment than to lack of funds. See page 803.

   d. No. Truman was not against the creation of a national healthcare program. In fact, he proposed a national health insurance program on two separate occasions. However, largely due to criticisms from the American Medical Association that the program was “socialized medicine” and criticisms from Republicans and conservative southern Democrats that the program was a “communist plot,” the program never passed Congress. See page 803.

5.  c. Correct. Truman acted to secure equal rights for African Americans by establishing the President’s Committee on Civil Rights and by ending racial discrimination in the federal government. As a result, Truman won the African American vote in key northern states. As a result, Truman carried those states, received the electoral votes from those states, and was elected to the presidency in 1948. See pages 804 and 809.

   a. No. Both the Progressive party candidate (Henry Wallace) and the Dixiecrat candidate (Strom Thurmond) continued their independent campaigns for the presidency through election day. See page 804.

   b. No. The Democratic party, not the Republican party, was divided in 1948. See page 804.

   d. No. The Republican party had taken a conservative stance on most issues and was perceived by the electorate as more conservative than the Democratic party. See page 804.
6. b. Correct. During the 1950s, most Americans unquestioningly accepted American society and believed that America was the most powerful and most righteous nation on earth. This belief led most Americans to believe that reform was unnecessary. Furthermore, Americans believed that the United States was engaged in a moral crusade against communism. This belief led many to believe that those who criticized America were aiding the enemy and were unpatriotic. See page 805.

   a. No. During the 1950s, most Americans paid little attention to the “faults” of American society, shunned idealistic causes, and saw society’s critics as maladjusted. See page 805.

   c. No. During the 1950s, most Americans were convinced of their ability to stand against any foe. See page 805.

   d. No. During the 1950s, most Americans trusted and respected those in positions of authority and seldom questioned their decisions. See page 805.

7. a. Correct. Although McCarthy was probably the most successful red baiter in the country, conservative and liberal politicians, labor leaders, religious leaders, and others used the public’s fear of communism against their opponents. They all contributed to the anti-Communist hysteria known as McCarthyism. See pages 806–807.

   b. No. There was no such treaty. See pages 806–807.

   c. No. Communist party membership declined from 83,000 in 1947 to 25,000 in 1954. See pages 806–807.

   d. No. Henry Wallace was a liberal Democrat, not a Communist, and no such conspiracy existed. See pages 806–807.

8. c. Correct. This act did, in effect, make membership in the Communist party illegal. The act passed with no dissenting votes in the Senate and with only two dissenting votes in the House. This indicates that liberals and conservatives, Democrats and Republicans shared in the anticommmunist consensus of the 1950s. See pages 807–808.

   a. No. The act was anticommmunist in its intent; however, it did not provide for the internment of communists during a national emergency. See pages 807–808.

   b. No. The Communist Control Act did not deal with the employment of communists in defense-related industries. See pages 807–808.

   d. No. The Communist Control Act did not deal with labor unions. See pages 807–808.

9. b. Correct. The gap between American ideals and the realities of American society made it difficult to compete with the Soviet Union among the Third World nonaligned nations. To win the support of these nations, the United States had to begin to live up to its ideals. See page 808.


   c. No. Although Truman sent a special message to Congress in February 1948 calling for federal antilynching and anti-poll tax laws, southern congressmen were openly opposed to such legislation and Congress never formally responded to the message. See page 808.

   d. No. Congress did not outlaw the Klan. See page 808.
10. b. Correct. The NAACP’s legal campaign against desegregation scored a major victory when the Court ruled separate educational facilities to be “inherently unequal.” See page 810.
   a. No. The Brown decision did not declare the poll tax to be unconstitutional. Use of the poll tax to abridge a citizen’s right to vote was not made illegal nationally until ratification of the Twenty-fourth Amendment in 1964. See page 810.
   c. No. In the Brown decision, the Supreme Court found that African Americans had suffered from segregated public educational institutions. See page 810.
   d. No. It was not until 1964 that the Civil Rights Act of that year made discrimination in public accommodations illegal. This was upheld by the Court in the same year. See page 810.

11. c. Correct. During the postwar years the income of most Americans increased. Per capital real income (based on actual purchasing power) rose 6 percent between 1945 and 1950. It then rose another 15 percent during the 1950s. As a result, not only were many Americans able to purchase more, they did purchase more. In addition, many Americans took advantage of the ready availability of credit. If they did not have cash to buy what they wanted, they borrowed. This resulted in consumer the growth of consumer credit from $5.7 billion in 1945 to $58 billion in 1961. See pages 812–813.
   a. No. Although stocks and bonds rose in value, most Americans did not invest heavily in the stock market. Furthermore, rising stock values do not automatically translate into real money or increased purchasing power. See pages 812–813.
   b. No. Although the nation’s GNP rose from $286.5 billion in 1950 to $506.5 billion in 1960, this rise was a consequence of sustained economic growth rather than the basis of that growth. See pages 812–813.
   d. No. The computer, although an important technological achievement of the age, did not put money into the hands of consumers, allowing them to purchase consumer goods. Therefore, the computer was not the economic basis of the sustained economic growth during the 1950s. See pages 812–813.

12. a. Correct. The truth of this answer is made clear in the opening vignette of this chapter. The people who lived on Nancy Circle consisted of (1) a divorced mother who worked as a secretary, dyed her hair blond, drove a convertible, and had a sister born with dwarfism; (2) a Japanese war bride and a German war bride; (3) people from Appalachia and from the small farms in south Georgia; and (4) people who had grown up in inner-city tenements. In all likelihood, that represents far more diversity than any one of those people would have experienced in the neighborhoods in which they grew up. See pages 797–798 and page 815.
   b. No. Although life in the suburbs did tend to be child centered, juvenile delinquency increased during the 1950 rather than declining. See pages 797–798 and page 815.
   c. No. It is true that most suburban residents were white. However, race is not the only determinant of diversity. See pages 797–798 and page 815.
   d. No. Although many women found suburban life satisfying, the number of married women in the work force increased rather than decreased during the 1950s. See pages 797–798 and page 815.
13. a. Correct. Although many factors such as fads and movies helped define youth culture during the 1950s, music was the most important factor. See page 819.

b. No. While it is true that television was important in youth culture during the 1950s and even helped shape certain fads, television was not the most important factor in defining youth culture. See page 819.

c. No. Although movies were important to young people during the 1950s and often helped shape fads and fashions, movies were not the most important factor in defining youth culture. See page 819.

d. No. Many times advertising was directed at America’s youth during the 1950s; however, advertising was not the most important factor in defining youth culture. See page 819.

14. b. Correct. The Crack in the Picture Window by John Keats and The Lonely Crowd by David Resiman were both critical of the conformity that was a component of middle-class culture during the 1950s. See page 821.

a. No. Neither The Crack in the Picture Window nor The Lonely Crowd dealt with the music of the 1950s. See page 821.

c. No. The Crack in the Picture Window by John Keats and The Lonely Crowd by David Resiman were not juvenile writings. See page 821.

d. No. The Crack in the Picture Window by John Keats and The Lonely Crowd by David Resiman did not deal with the political complacency or the “hedonistic” lifestyle of teenagers during the 1950s. See page 821.

15. c. Correct. In this attempt to dissolve reservations and end federal services to Native Americans, many Indians were displaced and many joined the ranks of the urban poor. See page 824.

a. No. The intent of the termination policy was to dissolve Indian reservations, not expand them. See page 824.

b. No. Although one in eight Indians left the reservations between 1954 and 1960, it cannot be said that they were either “successfully relocated” or “successfully assimilated.” See page 824.

d. No. This was not a program designed to aid Indians in the extraction of natural resources from tribal lands. See page 824.