

## The Postwar Boom

Many Americans enjoy new material comforts and new forms of entertainment during the post-war economic boom. Yet racial gaps remain, and millions continue to live in poverty.



# The Postwar Boom

SECTION 1 Postwar America

SECTION 2 The American Dream in the Fifties

SECTION 3 Popular Culture

SECTION 4 The Other America



NEXT

## Section 1

# Postwar America

The Truman and Eisenhower administrations lead the nation to make social, economic, and political adjustments following World War II.

## SECTION

# 1 Postwar America

## Readjustment and Recovery

---

### The Impact of the GI Bill

- 1944 **GI Bill of Rights** eases veterans' return to civilian life
- Pays partial tuition, unemployment benefits; provides loans

### Housing Crisis

- 10 million returning veterans face housing shortage
- Developers use assembly-line methods to mass-produce houses
- Build **suburbs**—small residential communities around cities

*Continued . . .*



## SECTION

## 1

*continued* **Readjustment and Recovery****Redefining the Family**

- Tensions from changed gender roles during war increase divorce rate

**Economic Readjustment**

- Over 1 million defense workers laid off; wages drop for many workers
- Price controls end; 25% increase in cost of scarce consumer goods
- Congress reestablishes price, wage, rent controls

**Remarkable Recovery**

- People have savings, service pay, war bonds; buy goods long missed
- Cold War keeps defense spending up; foreign aid creates markets



NEXT

## SECTION

## 1

## Meeting Economic Challenges

### President Truman's Inheritance

- **Harry S. Truman** can make difficult decisions, take responsibility

### Truman Faces Strikes

- 1946, higher prices, lower wages lead 4.5 million to strike
- Truman seizes mines, threatens to take over railroads
- Threatens to draft workers; unions give in

### “Had Enough?”

- Republicans win Senate, House; ignore Truman's domestic policy
- Congress passes Taft-Hartley Act, overturns many union rights

## SECTION

## 1

## Social Unrest Persists

### Truman Supports Civil Rights

- African Americans, especially veterans, demand rights as citizens
- Congress rejects civil rights laws; Truman issues executive orders:
  - integrates armed forces; ends discrimination in government hiring

### The 1948 Election

- Southern Democrats—**Dixiecrats**—protest civil rights, form own party
- Truman calls special session; asks Congress for social legislation
- Congress refuses; Truman goes on “whistlestop campaign”

*Continued . . .*



## SECTION

## 1

*continued* **Social Unrest Persists**

---

**Stunning Upset**

- Truman defeats Thomas E. Dewey in close political upset
- Democrats regain control of Congress, lose some Southern states

**The Fair Deal**

- Truman's **Fair Deal** is ambitious economic program, includes:
  - higher minimum wage, flood control projects, low-income housing
- Congress passes parts of Fair Deal

*Continued . . .*

NEXT



## SECTION

## 1

## Republicans Take the Middle Road

### I Like Ike!

- Truman's approval rating drops over Korean War, McCarthyism
  - decides not to run for reelection
- Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower runs against IL governor Adlai Stevenson
- Newspapers accuse VP candidate Richard M. Nixon of corruption
  - defends self in televised "Checkers speech"
- Eisenhower wins; Republicans narrowly take Congress

*Continued . . .*



## SECTION

## 1

*continued* **Republicans Take the Middle Road**

---

**Walking the Middle of the Road**

- Eisenhower conservative about money, liberal on social issues
- Ike tries to avoid civil rights movement, which is gaining strength
- On economy, works for balanced budget, tax cut
- Pushes social legislation, new Dept. of Health, Education, Welfare
- Popularity soars; is reelected in 1956

## Section 2

# The American Dream in the Fifties

During the 1950s, the economy booms, and many Americans enjoy material comfort.

## SECTION

## 2

## The American Dream in the Fifties

### The Organization and the Organization Man

---

#### Employment in the U.S.

- By 1956, majority of Americans not in blue-collar (industrial) jobs
- More in higher-paying, white-collar (office, professional) positions
- Many in services, like sales, advertising, insurance, communications

#### Conglomerates

- **Conglomerates**—corporation that owns smaller, unrelated companies
- Diversify to protect from downturns in individual industries

*Continued . . .*



NEXT

## SECTION

## 2

*continued* The Organization and the Organization Man

---

**Franchises**

- **Franchise**—company offers similar products, services in many places
  - also the right to use company name and system
- Fast-food restaurants among first, most successful franchises

**Social Conformity**

- Many employees with well-paid, secure jobs lose individuality
- Personality tests see if job candidates fit in company culture
- Companies reward teamwork, loyalty, encourage conformity



NEXT

## SECTION

## 2

## The Suburban Lifestyle

---

### The Baby Boom

- 1950s, 85% of new homes built in suburbs
- 1945–1965 **baby boom**—soaring birth rate after soldiers return

### Advances in Medicine and Childcare

- New drugs fight, prevent childhood diseases
- **Dr. Jonas Salk** develops vaccine for poliomyelitis
- Pediatrician Dr. Benjamin Spock writes popular guide for parents
- Baby boom impacts economy, educational system

*Continued . . .*



## SECTION

## 2

*continued* The Suburban Lifestyle

---

**Women's Roles**

- Magazines, TV, movies glorify role of homemaker, mother
- Over 1/5 of suburban wives dissatisfied with their lives
- 1960, 40% mothers work; limited opportunities, less pay than men

**Leisure in the Fifties**

- Shorter work week, paid vacation, labor-saving devices free up time
- People have time for recreational activities, spectator sports
- Book, magazine, comic book sales climb rapidly



NEXT

## SECTION

## 2

## The Automobile Culture

---

### Automania

- Cheap, plentiful gas, easy credit, advertising increase car sales
- No public transit in suburbs; cars necessary

### The Interstate Highway System

- Local, state roads link cities, suburbs to schools, shops, work
- Interstate Highway Act—nationwide highway network unites country
- Highways enable long-haul trucking, new towns, family vacations
- Towns near highways prosper; those near older, smaller roads decline

*Continued . . .*





## SECTION

## 2

*continued* The Automobile Culture**Mobility Takes Its Toll**

- Auto boom stimulates new businesses—  
e.g. drive-in movies
- Cars create social, environmental problems—  
e.g. accidents, pollution
- Upper-, middle-class whites leave cities; jobs,  
businesses follow
- Economic gulf widens between suburban and urban  
- also widens gap between middle class and the poor

## SECTION

## 2

## Consumerism Unbound

---

### New Products

- 60% of Americans in middle class; twice as many as before WW II
- **Consumerism** (buying material goods) equated with success
- Numerous new products appear on market in response to demand

### Planned Obsolescence

- **Planned obsolescence**—making products that get outdated, wear out
  - makes consumers buy or want to buy new ones

*Continued . . .*



NEXT

## SECTION

## 2

*continued* **Consumerism Unbound**

---

**Buy Now, Pay Later**

- Credit purchases, credit cards, installments extend payment period
- Private debt grows; consumers confident of future prosperity

**The Advertising Age**

- Most people have satisfied basic needs; ads encourage extra spending
- Psychological appeals in ads lure consumers to particular products
- Ads appear in all media; television emerges as powerful new tool



NEXT



### Section 3

# Popular Culture

Mainstream Americans, as well as the nation's subcultures, embrace new forms of entertainment during the 1950s.



NEXT

## SECTION

## 3 Popular Culture

### New Era of the Mass Media

---

#### The Rise of Television

- **Mass media**—means of communication that reach large audiences
- TV first widely available 1948; in almost 90% of homes in 1960
- **Federal Communications Commission (FCC)** regulates communications
- By 1956, FCC allows 500 stations to broadcast
- Programs: comedies, news, dramas, variety shows, children's shows
- Lifestyle changes: *TV Guide* is popular magazine; TV dinners

*Continued . . .*



## SECTION

## 3

*continued* New Era of the Mass Media

---

**Stereotypes and Gunslingers**

- Women, minorities on TV are stereotypes; few blacks, Latinos
- Westerns glorify historical frontier conflicts
- Raise concerns about effect of violence on children

**Radio and Movies**

- Television cuts into radio, movie markets
- Radio turns to local news, weather, music, community affairs
- Movies capitalize on size, color, sound advantages; try gimmicks



NEXT

## SECTION

## 3

## A Subculture Emerges

---

### The Beat Movement

- **Beat movement**—writers, artists express social, literary nonconformity
- Poets, writers use free, open form; read works aloud in coffeehouses
- Beatnik attitudes, way of life attract media attention, students

## SECTION

## 3

## African Americans and Rock 'n' Roll

### Rock 'n' Roll

- Black musicians add electric instruments to blues—rhythm and blues
- **Rock 'n' roll**—mix of rhythm and blues, country, pop
- Has heavy rhythm, simple melodies, lyrics about teenage concerns
- Music appeals to newly affluent teens who can buy records
- Many adults concerned music will lead to delinquency, immorality

*Continued . . .*





## SECTION

## 3

*continued* African Americans and Rock 'n' Roll

---

**The Racial Gap**

- African-American singers like Nat “King” Cole, Lena Horne popular
- Many black artists play **jazz**, music characterized by improvisation
- African-American shows mostly broadcast on black radio stations
  - content, advertising target black audiences
- Important to black audiences with fewer TV sets, no presence on TV



## Section 4

# The Other America

Amidst the prosperity of the 1950s, millions of Americans live in poverty.



NEXT

## SECTION

## 4

# The Other America

## The Urban Poor

---

### White Flight

- 1962, 25% of Americans below poverty level
- Post WW II–1960, 5 million blacks go from rural South to urban North
- White flight results in loss of businesses, tax payers to cities
- Cities can no longer afford to maintain or improve:
  - schools, public transportation, police and fire departments

*Continued . . .*



## SECTION

## 4

*continued* The Urban Poor**The Inner Cities**

- Poverty grows rapidly in decaying inner cities
- Poor economic conditions lead to illness and terrible conditions

**Urban Renewal**

- **Urban renewal**—replace rundown buildings with new low-income housing
- Housing and Urban Development Dept. created to improve conditions
- Not enough housing built for displaced people



NEXT

## SECTION

## 4

## Poverty Leads to Activism

### Mexicans Seek Employment

- Many Southwest Mexicans become U.S. citizens after Mexican War
- 1942–47, Mexican **braceros**, hired hands, allowed into U.S. to work
- After war, many remain illegally; many others enter to look for work

### The Longoria Incident

- Undertaker refuses funeral services to Felix Longoria, WW II veteran
- Outraged Mexican-American veterans organize G.I. Forum
- Unity League of CA registers voters, promotes responsive candidates

*Continued . . .*



## SECTION

## 4

*continued* Poverty Leads to Activism**Native Americans Continue their Struggle**

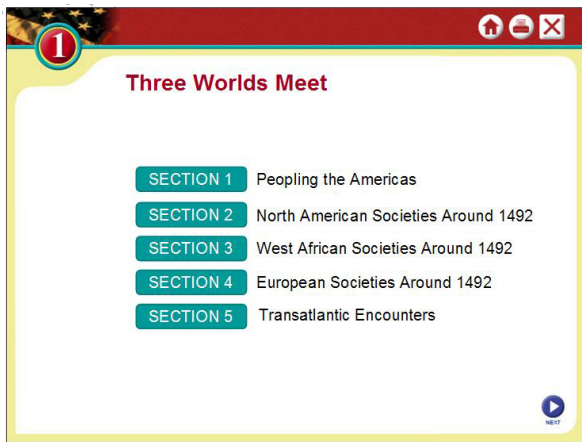
- During Depression, U.S. policy of Native American autonomy
- National Congress of American Indians: civil rights, maintain customs
- U.S. stops family allotments, wages; outsiders take tribal lands

**The Termination Policy**

- **Termination policy** cuts economic support, gives land to individuals
- Bureau of Indian Affairs helps resettlement in cities
- Termination policy is a failure; abandoned in 1963



**This is the end of the chapter presentation of lecture notes. Click the HOME or EXIT button.**



## Print Slide Show

1. On the **File** menu, select **Print**
2. In the pop-up menu, select **Microsoft PowerPoint**  
If the dialog box does not include this pop-up, continue to step 4
3. In the **Print what** box, choose the presentation format you want to print: slides, notes, handouts, or outline
4. Click the **Print** button to print the PowerPoint presentation