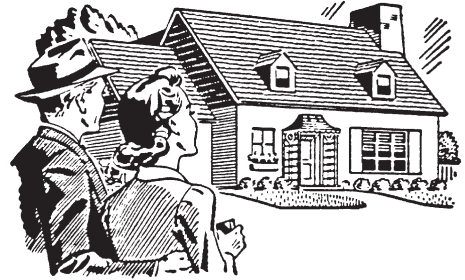


Unit 12

1945 - Present

America's Post-War Consumer Society

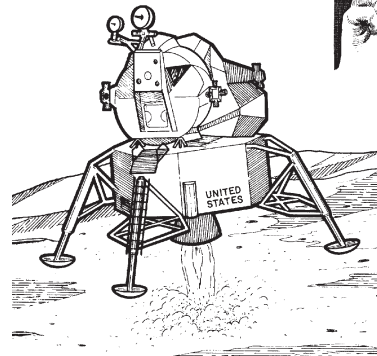
The decades after World War II were mostly good years for Americans. The hard times of the Great Depression and the shortages of the war years were in the past. The booming economy of the 1950s and 1960s created jobs and widespread opportunity. New homes were being built by the millions in the wide open suburban areas just outside cities. Families quickly filled them with the sounds of children at play.



These were years of great social change for America. African Americans began a movement to push for greater equality. Women's roles at home and work were changing.



We will also see in this unit that incredible advances in technology, industry, and science made this an especially exciting time to be an American.



Internet resources:

www.fasttrackteaching.com/ffap

Words and people to know:

consumer

consumer goods

rationing

productivity

credit

labor unions

Interstate Highway System

social media

telecommunications

news media

Information Age

G.I. Bill of Rights

Harry S. Truman

desegregate

civil rights

legislation

Baby Boom

demographics

National Defense

Education Act

Civil Rights Movement

human rights

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Glossary for Unit 12 Vocabulary Words		

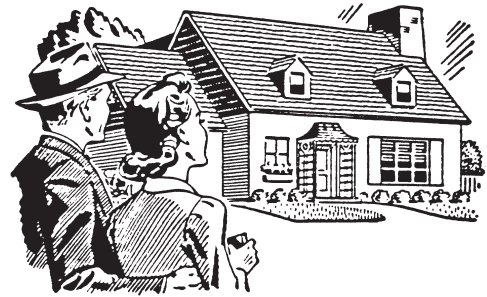
Internet Support Site: www.fasttrackteaching.com/ffap

Notes:

Outline – America’s Post-War Consumer Society

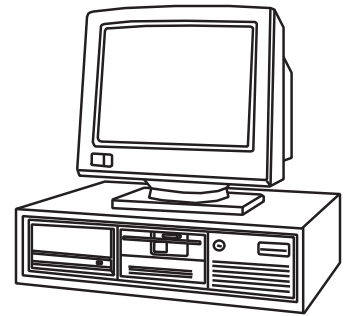
1. The American economy grew rapidly after World War II ended.

- A. Businesses converted from making war materials to production of consumer goods.
- B. Rationing ended.
- C. Productivity in factories increased.
- D. Shoppers could buy things on credit.
- E. The workforce shifted back to men as most women in war factories returned to family responsibilities.
- F. Many workers gained better pay and benefits, in part because of stronger labor unions.



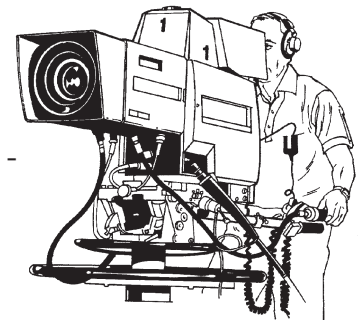
2. New technologies helped many industries grow rapidly.

- A. Automobiles and the Interstate Highway System - made auto travel easier, faster, and safer.
- B. Airline industry - jet engines made air travel faster.
- C. Space exploration - rockets, satellites, and spacecraft.
- D. Computer industry - created better, faster, cheaper computers.
- E. Internet and social media - the World Wide Web, Facebook.
- F. Satellite systems and telecommunications - GPS devices, cell phones.
- G. Entertainment and news media industries - cable TV, TV news.
- H. Mining - safer, more productive with better machines.



3. New technologies had a big impact on American life.

- A. Increased travel, both within the country and to other countries.
- B. Greater access to news and other information.
- C. Cheaper, more convenient means of communication.
- D. Improved quality of life from air conditioning / central heat systems -
 - * encouraged population growth in the Southeast and Southwest.
- E. Regional variations in American culture decreased because of nationwide access to entertainment and information on -
 - * TV and radio broadcasts on nationwide networks.
 - * Internet services, computer games, etc.



4. These changes are often described as part of the “Information Age.”

- A. The U.S. economy was increasingly based on knowledge and information, rather on than heavy industries like steel making and manufacturing.
 - * Small, affordable computers were first developed in the 1970s, so that decade is often considered the start of the Information Age.

Outline – *continued*

5. Government policies and programs helped expand educational and employment opportunities in America.

- A. The “G.I. Bill” (the G.I. Bill of Rights) gave veterans of the military many education, employment, and housing benefits.
- B. President Harry S. Truman desegregated the armed forces (ending segregation of the races in the armed forces).
- C. Civil rights legislation (laws) increased educational, economic, and political opportunities for women and minorities.



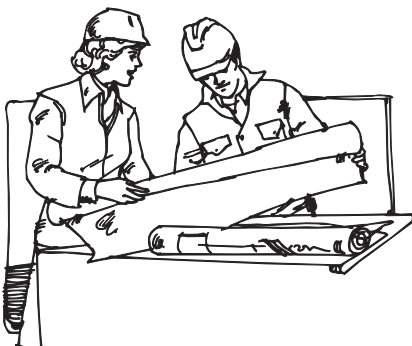
6. American life shifted into new patterns after World War II.

- A. A strong economy created a widespread sense of opportunity, due to -
 - * a healthy job market.
 - * increased productivity in factories.
 - * increased demand for American products.
- B. Greater investment was made in schools and education.
 - * The **National Defense Education Act** (1958) gave federal money to expand college programs, especially in science and mathematics.
- C. The Baby Boom – the big increase in births after World War II – changed America’s demographics (population pattern).
- D. The Interstate Highway System made Americans more mobile.
- E. African Americans pushed for full equality (the Civil Rights Movement).
- F. Women pushed for a wider range of options, and many more wanted to work in full time jobs and have a family.
- G. More attention was given to human rights issues, especially regarding help for the poor and disadvantaged.



7. Individual citizens, from all backgrounds, influenced American life in many ways.

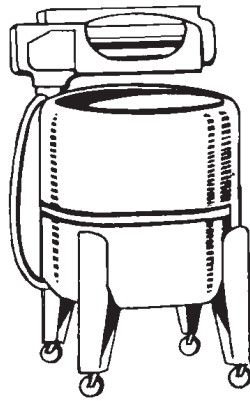
- A. A strong economy and a spirit of “can do” optimism encouraged people to pursue their goals in every field.
 - * Examples: medicine, technology, space research, business, industry, banking, music, art, communications, academics, architecture.



A Growing Economy After World War II



BUY IT ON CREDIT!



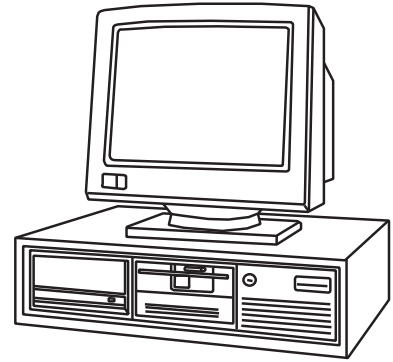
What were the reasons for the rapid growth in the American economy after World War II?

A Growing Economy

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on the right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.

New Technologies & Growing Industries

The computer industry is one example of an industry that grew thanks to new technology. There are many others, ranging from underground mining to outer space. Here are some examples:



The auto industry and the
Interstate Highway System

The airline industry - jet engines

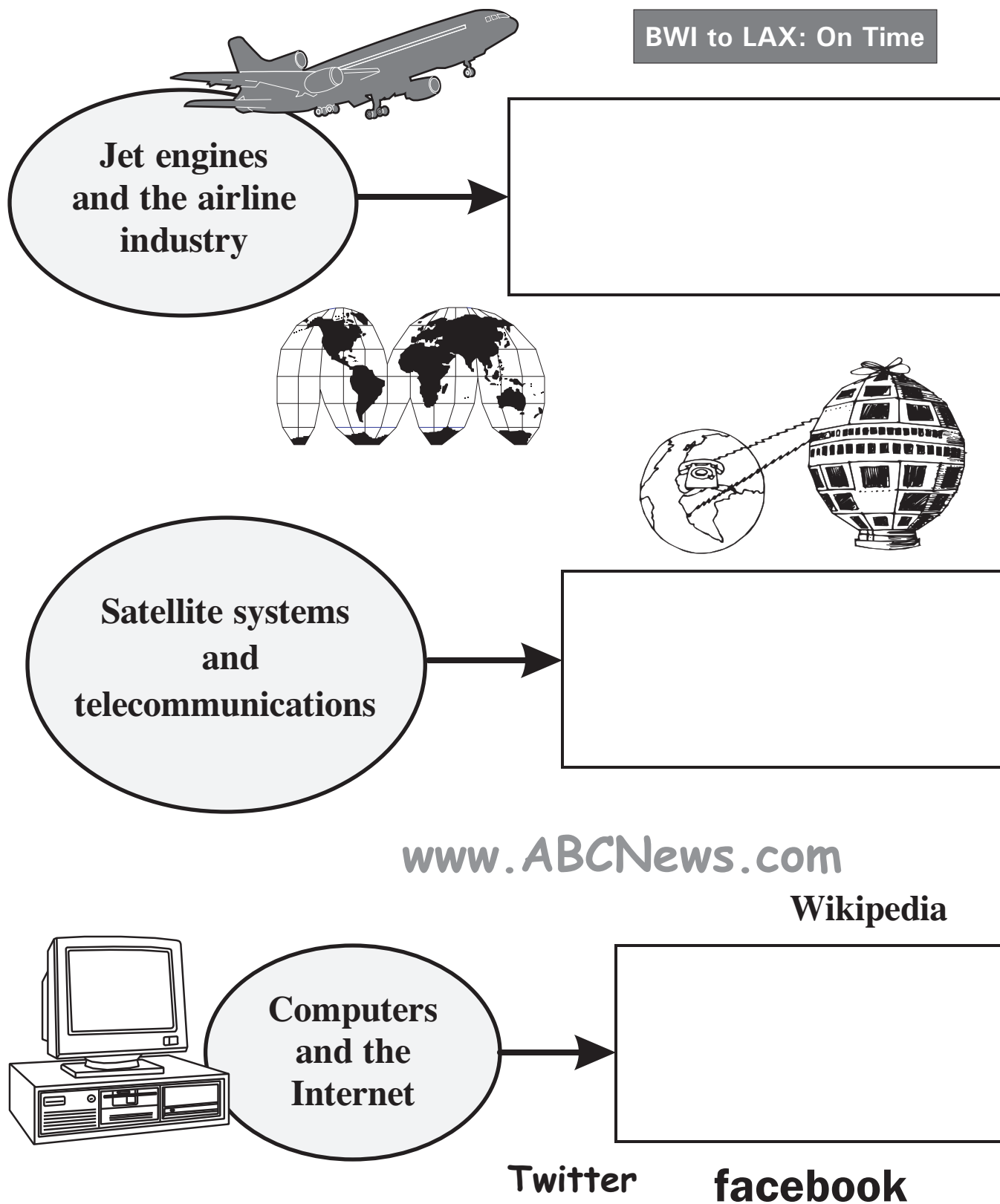
Space exploration

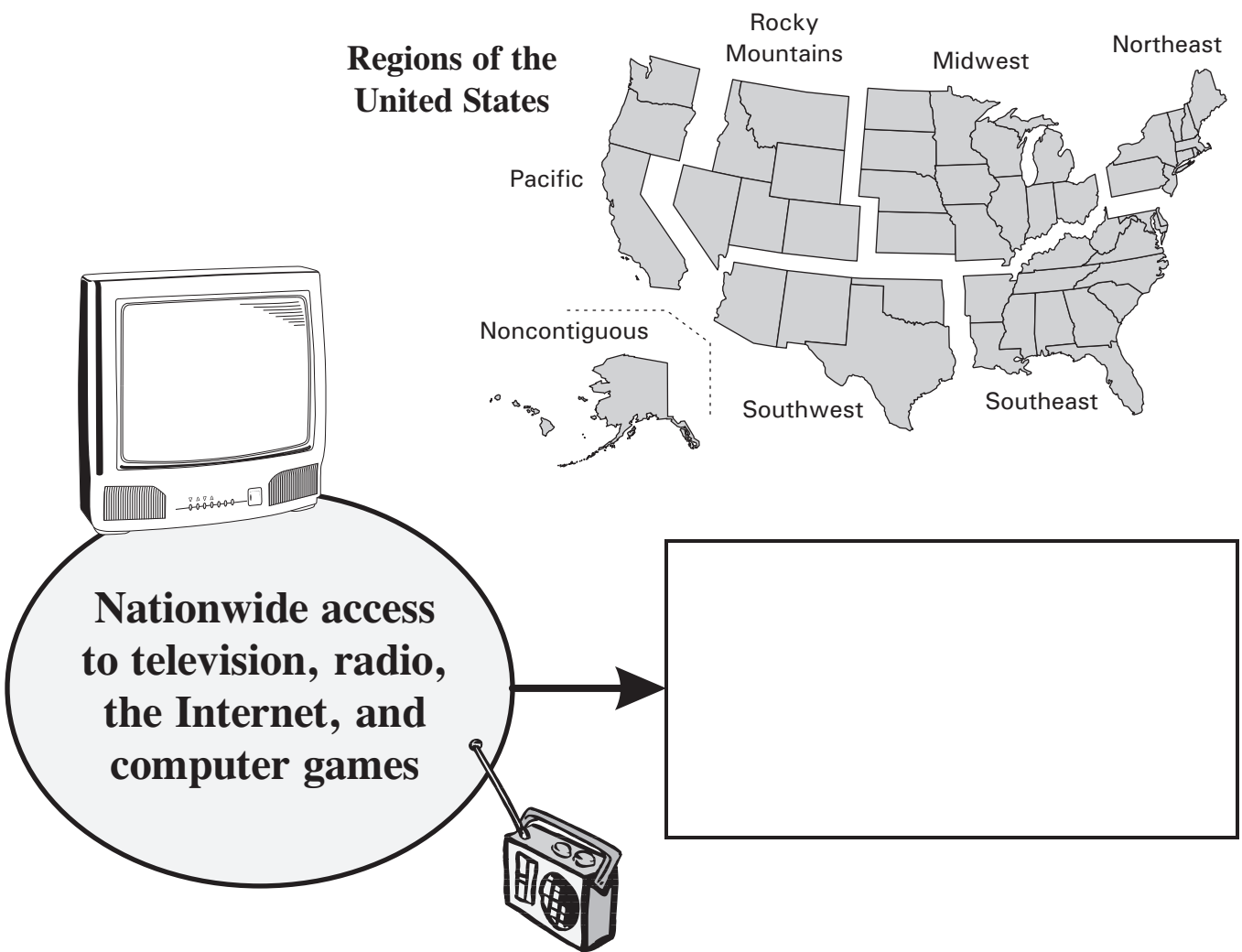
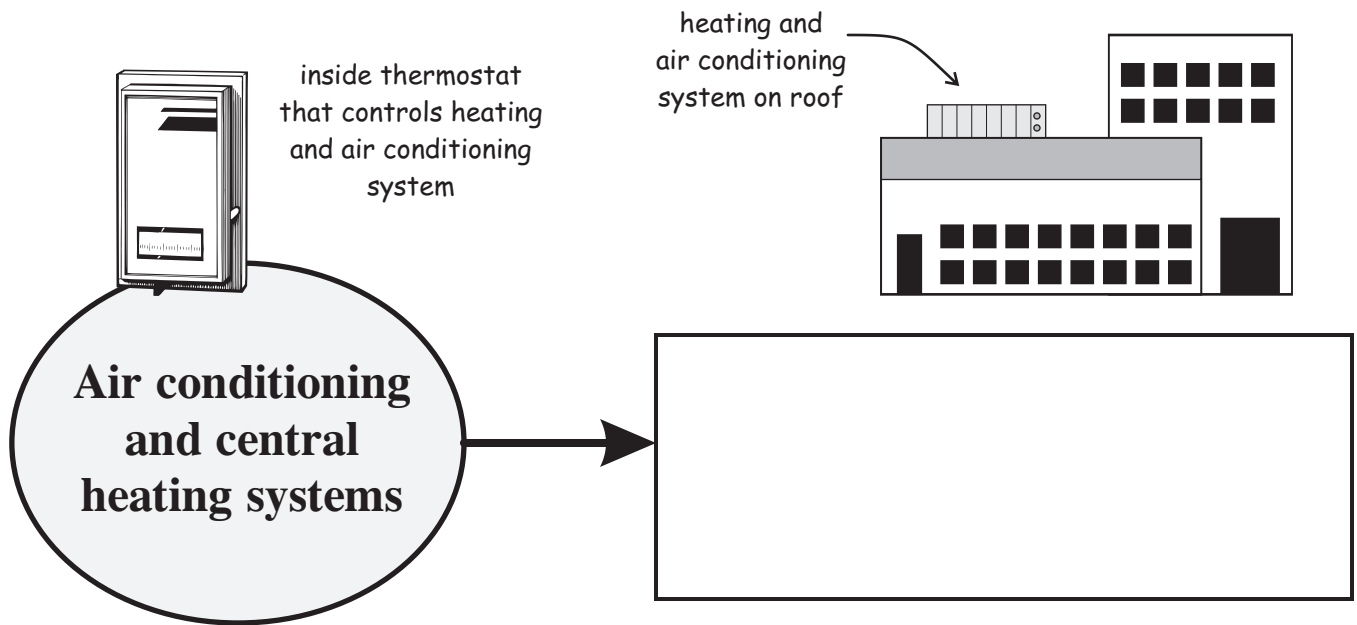
The Internet
and social media

Satellite systems and
telecommunications

Entertainment and the
news media

The Impact of Technology on American Life



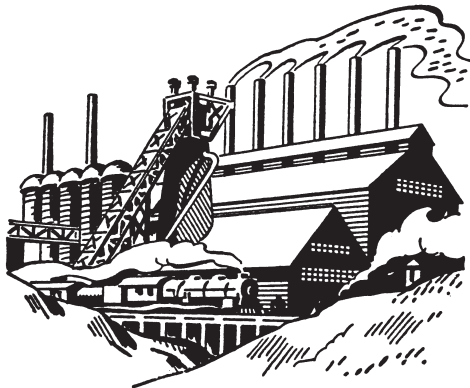
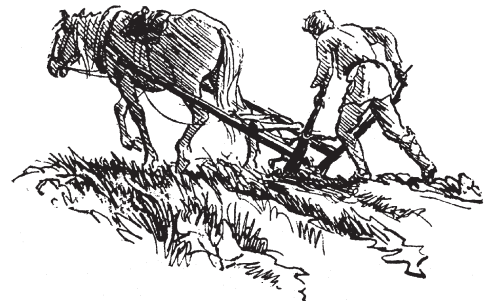


The Information Age



The changes in technology and business in these years are often described as the beginning of "The Information Age." It represents a tremendous shift in American (and world) history!

Agricultural Era: Most of human history



Industrial Era: 1820s - 1960s

Information Age: 1970s - present

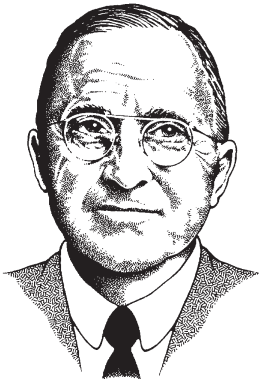
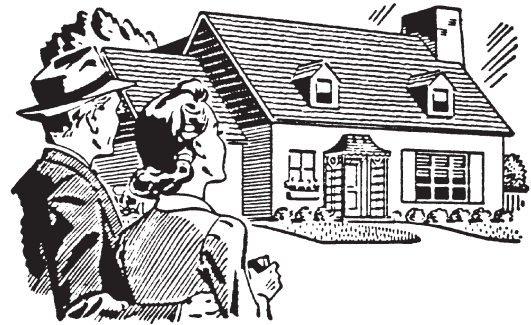


Government Policies Expanded Opportunities



After World War II, government programs and policies expanded educational and employment opportunities for all Americans.

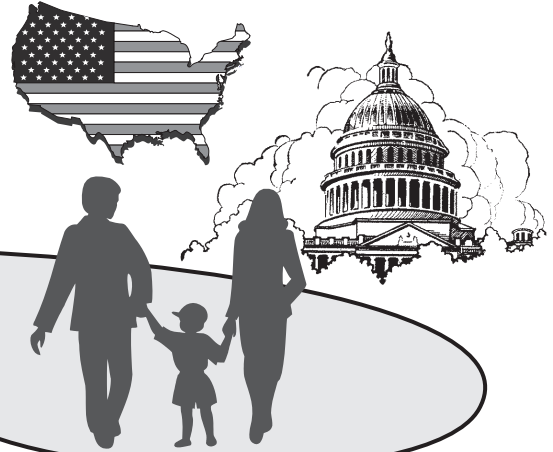
Military veterans, women, and minorities were greatly helped by these:





Changing Patterns in United States Society

American life changed in many ways after World War II. Here are some of the big factors that led to new patterns in our society:



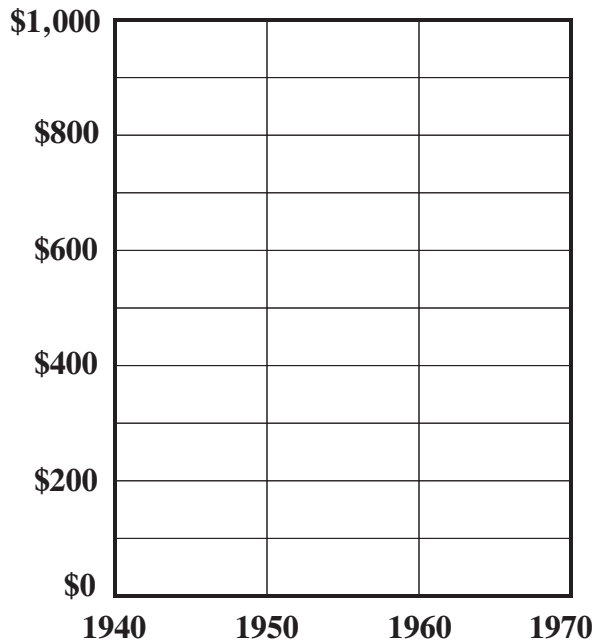
The federal government played a role in many of these changes. For example, a new law called the **National Defense Education Act (1958)** provided money to expand college programs, especially in the

fields of math and science.

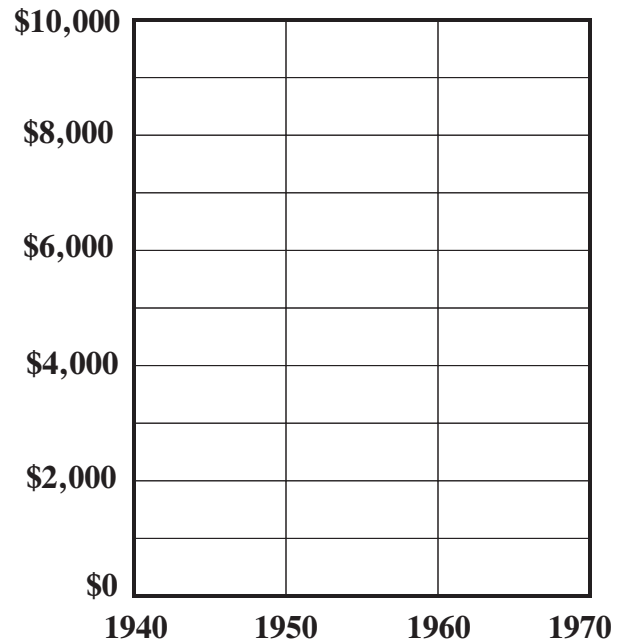
The federal government also put more attention on **human rights** issues. New programs were started to give more help to the poor and disadvantaged.

Charting the Post-War Consumer Society

Finish these line graphs to chart the growth of the U.S. economy in these years. The gross national product (GNP) measures the total dollar value of all the goods and services the people of a nation produce in a year.



**Gross National Product
(Billions of Dollars)
1940 to 1970**



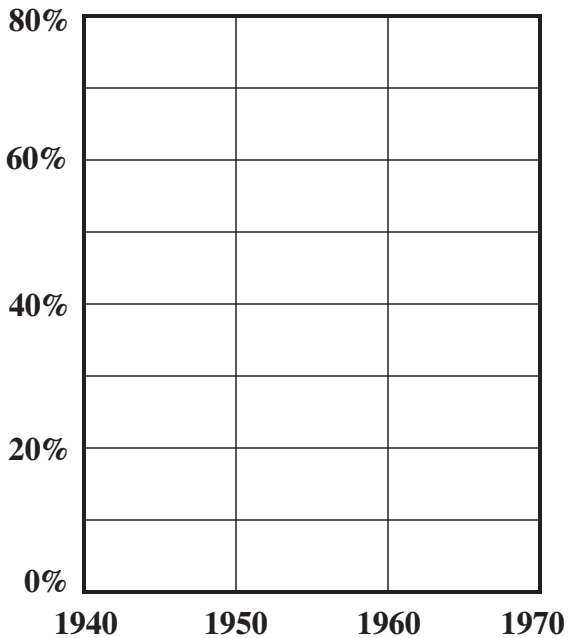
**Average Factory Wages
(Dollars per Year)
1940 to 1970**

Use the table below to find the information to make the line graphs above.

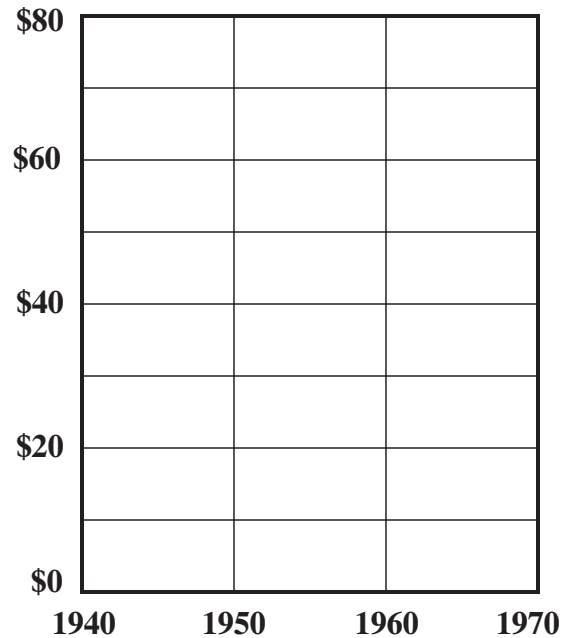
Year	Gross National Product (Billions of Dollars)	Average Factory Wages (Dollars per Year)
1940	99.7	1,432
1950	285	3,302
1960	504	5,352
1970	977	8,150

source: *Historical Statistics of the United States*
and *Statistical Abstract of the United States*

Finish these line graphs to show more signs of the growing prosperity of this period. The home ownership rate measures the percent of American families that own their own home. Do you think figures like these are a valid way to measure whether or not citizens were achieving "The American Dream" in these decades?



**Home Ownership Rate
(Percent)
1940 to 1970**



**Purchases of Clothing,
Accessories, and Jewelry
(Billions of Dollars)
1940 to 1970**

Use the table below to find the information to make the line graphs above.

Year	Home Ownership Rate (Percent)	Purchases of Clothing, Accessories, and Jewelry (Billions of Dollars)
1940	43.6	8.9
1950	55	23.7
1960	61.9	33
1970	62.4	62.8

*source: Historical Statistics of the United States
and Statistical Abstract of the United States*

Baby Boom - the generation born after World War II, from 1945 to around 1960. This generation was so large that it continues to have a huge impact on the nation's demographics (population pattern).

civil rights - the rights of citizens to participate fully in government and society, including freedom of speech, freedom of religion, the right to vote, and the right to be treated fairly and equally under all laws.

Civil Rights Movement - the push by many Americans to end racial segregation and racial discrimination in the U.S. While the effort began to organize in the early 1900s, it attracted much more public attention and support during the 1950s and early 1960s. It was led primarily by blacks, but many whites were involved in the movement as well.

consumer - a term referring broadly to everyone who purchases things for their own or their family's own everyday use.

consumer goods - things that are bought by people for everyday life, such as clothing, furniture, refrigerators, and television sets.

credit - to buy "on credit" means to buy something now but pay for it later, for example, with a credit card.

demographics - statistics that describe various patterns in a population of people. Example: the Baby Boom created a very large generation of young people born in the 15 years after World War II.

desegregate - to end segregation (separation of the races).

G.I. Bill of Rights - a law passed by Congress near the end of World War II to help veterans adjust back to civilian life. It provided low-interest loans for buying a house or starting a business. It also offered monthly payments to veterans who wanted to finish high school, go to college, or take vocational education (job training) classes. It is often called "the G.I. Bill."

human rights - a term for a wide range of rights that all human beings are entitled to, such as the right to freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and fair treatment in courts of law. Often the term is now used in an expanded sense to include such things as a right to health care, fair employment opportunities, decent housing, and protection from discrimination.

Information Age - a term for the rapidly growing importance of knowledge and information based businesses in the U.S. and worldwide. Many people consider the development of personal computers in the 1970s as the start of the Information Age.

Interstate Highway System - the network of modern highways built across the U.S., mostly in the 1950s and 1960s, to make travel faster and safer. These highways are marked with numbers, such as "Interstate 95," and have no stop signs or stop lights.

labor unions - organizations of workers who join together, mainly to seek high pay and safer work conditions. Example: the United Auto Workers union.

legislation - a fancy word for a law or group of laws.

National Defense Education Act - a law passed by Congress in 1958 to give money to help colleges expand their programs in math, science, and foreign languages. The action was taken partly in response to Cold War fears that the Soviet Union might get ahead of the U.S. in rocket science and space exploration.

news media - any form of communication that spreads information to the public about current events, such as radio, TV, the Internet, newspapers, or magazines.

productivity - a measure that compares how much of a product a business produces, to the total amount of labor and materials used to produce it.

rationing - to limit purchases of products by the public, as was done during World War II in order to conserve products like sugar, meat, tires, and gasoline for the war effort.

social media - computer applications that keep friends in touch over the Internet, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

telecommunications - any form of communication over a distance, but especially by electronic and wireless means, such as cell phones, pagers, and satellite TV.

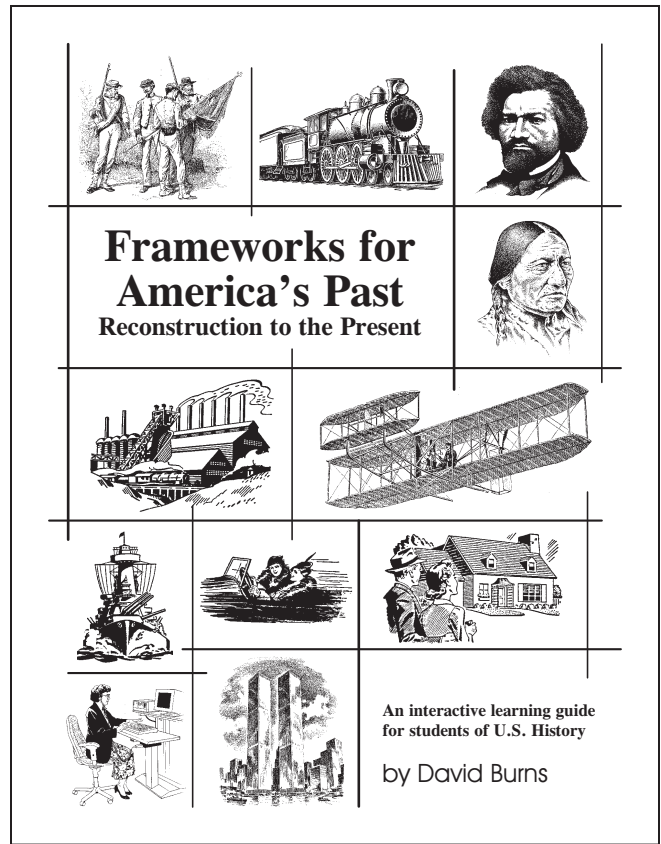
Truman, Harry S. - president of the U.S. from 1945 to 1953. A few years after World War II ended, he ordered desegregation (an end to segregation) of the armed forces. That meant whites and blacks would serve in the same units, rather than being separated as was common before that time.



The Teacher Key and additional
resources to use with these
pages are at:

www.fasttrackteaching.com/ffap

Fasttrack Teaching Materials
6215 Lavell Court
Springfield, VA 22152
www.fasttrackteaching.com



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for students of U.S. History

by David Burns

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