Overview

This course looks at the United States’ development in the postwar years. It describes the era of “cold war,” as well as discusses social change and new government policies. It also examines science, technology, and society. Reviewing the critical events of the post-world war years will enable you to recognize the forces that shaped the current United States of America.

The information needed to achieve this goal is presented in the textbook *A History of the United States*. The original textbook has been repurposed for this course; that is, it has been redesigned to meet your learning needs as a distance education student. For instance, the repurposed textbook directly integrates directions and other course components into the text. It introduces the material presented in the textbook, and it identifies the learning objectives for each lesson. For your convenience, it includes glossary terms at the beginning of each lesson. You will find these glossary terms in the section titled “Terms to Know.” The repurposed textbook also includes the review questions and assignments that enable you and
your instructor to evaluate your progress throughout the course. In addition, it describes some material presented visually in the original textbook.

The textbook is extremely long. Therefore, it has been divided into the following courses:
U.S. History: Discovery to Jacksonian Era
U.S. History: The 19th Century
U.S. History: World Wars
U.S. History: Post-World War Years

Each course is divided into modules. The three modules in this course are based on Units 10–12 of the textbook. These modules are further divided into lessons, which are based on the textbook chapters.

As previously stated, the goal of this course is to review how the critical events of the post-world war years helped shape the current United States of America. Module 1 examines the years 1945–1960 when the United States dealt with the political changes that followed the war. It discusses the tensions that arose on the world stage. It focuses on the socio-economic changes that took place during this period.
Module 2 explains the upheaval that marked the period 1961–1974. It examines the optimism and promise of the Kennedy era, and discusses the events that occurred under the Presidency of Lyndon B. Johnson. It also summarizes the rise and fall of Richard Nixon.

Module 3 discusses the American people, older and wiser, as they emerge from these turbulent decades and start looking ahead. It examines the pursuit of civil rights for all people in the United States. It discusses the Presidencies of Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, and Bill Clinton.

No prerequisites are necessary before starting any course in the series. Although you’re advised to take the courses in sequence, it is not necessary to complete them all. For instance, if you’re interested in the discovery of America, the first course would be a logical place to start. If, however, you would like to learn more about the postwar years, this course is more appropriate. You decide which courses can best meet your needs.

To complete this course you will need the materials that The Hadley School for the Blind has provided and writing materials in the medium of your choice. If you
are taking the audiocassette version of this course, you will also need your own tape recorder.

The review questions that follow each section are for your personal development only. Do not mail your answers to your Hadley instructor. Rather, check your comprehension by comparing your answers with those provided. Note that answers to some review questions occasionally provide more information than you will find in the textbook.

You are required to submit the assignment that concludes each lesson. Remember to wait for your instructor’s feedback before submitting your next assignment. If you mail your assignments, send them as Free Matter for the Blind provided they are in braille or large print (14 point or larger), or on cassette or computer disk. Mailing labels are enclosed for your convenience. The enclosed contact information card indicates your instructor’s fax number and email address in case you prefer to send your assignments electronically.

Now, if you’re ready to explore the events that took place during the postwar years, begin Module 1: Postwar Problems 1945–1960.
The end of the Truman years found the United States locked in a hot war in Asia and a cold war in the rest of the world. The declared American purpose was to “contain” international communism. “Containing” meant to box in communism where it already was and keep it from expanding. Fear of Communists within the United States was running rampant, fanned most of all by Senator Joseph R. McCarthy.

In fact, the threats at home and abroad were nowhere near as serious as many Americans feared. Communism was not a single, solid force. It was found in many nations, and everywhere was the declared enemy of the democracies. But each country had its own history. People had their patriotism as well as their communism. Where the Soviets ruled nations from the outside, they had trouble keeping their forced allies under control.

The secretive, insecure Soviets were at least as afraid of the United States as Americans were of them. Communists were taught that in the long run, out of
war and confusion, the capitalist democracies were sure to lose. But they were impressed by the power of the United States, by our technology and our comfortable way of life. Many of them realized that all peoples of the world would be losers in a third world war. Somehow in the years ahead the United States and the Soviet Union had to exist together.

Familiarizing yourself with the events that occurred during Eisenhower’s presidency will enable you to identify the forces that helped shape the current United States of America.

**Objectives**

After completing this lesson, you will be able to

1. examine how a Republican President handled domestic and foreign policies after a twenty-year rule of Democratic Presidents
2. discuss the Eisenhower administration and its position in the political spectrum
3. describe the highlights of the civil rights movement through the 1950s
4. analyze how Eisenhower handled the difficult international events around 1956
Terms to Know

The following terms appear in this lesson. Familiarize yourself with their meanings so you can use them in your course work.

*demilitarized zone*: an area where, by international agreement, no troops or armaments are allowed

*massive retaliation*: the military policy of the United States announced by Secretary of State John Foster Dulles in January 1954, which threatened to respond to Soviet or Communist Chinese attacks on another country with an immediate all-out strike

*military-industrial complex*: the combination of interests of the armed forces and the industries that supply their needs; the term was used by President Dwight Eisenhower in his 1961 farewell address

*nationalize*: to take property, such as land or a business, from its private owners and place it under government control

*summit conference*: a meeting of the heads of state of two or more countries
1. The Republicans Return

For twenty years our Presidents had been Democrats. They had led the United States through a depression, hot war and cold, and now into a “police action” in Korea. What would happen to the domestic and foreign policies forged during these years when a Republican again became President?

Ike and Adlai

The Republican National Convention met at Chicago on July 7, 1952. The party’s chances of winning the election in the fall looked good. The war in Korea was at a stalemate. The country was plagued by inflation. China was lost to communism. And some petty corruption had surfaced in Washington—even touching friends of the President. The main competition for the nomination was between Senator Taft of Ohio with his conservative followers, and the liberal international
wing of the party, which had persuaded General Dwight D. Eisenhower to enter the race.

Eisenhower won on the first ballot after skillful early convention moves by his supporters. His running mate was the eager anti-Communist Senator Richard M. Nixon of California. He had been elected to the Senate in 1950 in a mud-slinging campaign when he recklessly accused his opponent of links to the Communists. The Republican platform attacked Democrats for their foreign policy, blaming them for the loss of China and the war in Korea. The Republicans were not satisfied merely to “contain” communism. Instead they intended to free the captive peoples behind the iron curtain. At home, they wanted to balance the budget, lower the national debt, and “return honesty to government.”

When the Democrats arrived in Chicago for their convention, they had no leading candidate. President Truman had declined to run again but had urged the urbane Adlai E. Stevenson, governor of Illinois, to be the nominee. The wellborn Stevenson was as different as possible from the rough-hewn, self-made Truman. The grandson of a former Vice-President, he was a graduate of Princeton, a prosperous lawyer, and a full-
fledged intellectual. Stevenson refused Truman’s suggestion. The chance of beating the nation’s war hero looked slim. But Stevenson roused the interest of the delegates with his wise and witty speech that opened the convention. When no candidate received a majority on the first two ballots, the delegates drafted Stevenson.

The election of 1952

Governor Stevenson declared that it was time to “talk sense to the American people.” They were faced with “a long, patient, costly struggle which alone can assure triumph over the great enemies of man—war, poverty, and tyranny—and the assaults upon human dignity which are the most grievous consequences of each.”

Stevenson waged one of the most eloquent campaigns in United States history. Still it was hard to beat the friendly and attractive war hero everyone knew as “Ike.” “I like Ike,” the buttons read. With earnest charm, Ike promised to go to Korea to end the war. He pounded at Communists and corruption in government. Eisenhower had found the formula for victory.
Sixty-one million Americans went to the polls. On the evening of November 4, millions watched the returns on television as Eisenhower swept to victory. He carried thirty-nine states, including the usually Democratic southern states of Virginia, Tennessee, Florida, and Texas, piling up a total of 442 electoral votes. Stevenson’s 89 votes came from the other nine southern states. The popular vote was 33.6 million to 26.6 million.

The victory was more a nationwide approval of the famous war hero than an endorsement of the program of the “GOP”—the Grand Old Party, as the Republicans liked to call themselves. In sharp contrast to the Eisenhower landslide, the Republicans won Congress by only the slim margin of one vote in the Senate and eight in the House. The popular “Ike” had ended twenty years of Democratic Presidents.

Dwight David Eisenhower

“He has the power of drawing the hearts of men toward him as a magnet attracts the bits of metal,” British General Montgomery said of Eisenhower. “He merely has to smile at you, and you trust him at once.” This was what attracted people to Ike—even more than
his successful leadership of the Allied invasion of Europe.

Ike was a career soldier. Born in Texas in 1890, he moved with his family to Abilene, Kansas. After high school, he went to the United States Military Academy at West Point. When he graduated in 1915, he began his army career. He served under MacArthur in the Philippines (1935–1940), then speedily rose in rank to command the huge Allied Expeditionary Force that was to win victory over Germany.

Ike’s great skill as a general was not in leading armies in the field but in persuading other generals to cooperate. He had a quick temper, but he kept it under control. He was good at smoothing over the differences between the talented but touchy commanders from many nations. All these men had to work together if Hitler was to be defeated.

After the war he remained in the army as Chief of Staff. In 1948 he became president of Columbia University. Three years later he was called back to serve as the first Supreme Commander of NATO forces in Europe. That was his job when he resigned in June
1952 to return home and campaign for the GOP nomination for President.

**Achieving peace in Korea**

Ike had promised that if elected he would go to Korea to end the war. He kept his promise and went to Korea one month after his election. There was no simple way to end the conflict. Talks had collapsed in October 1952. Now, in 1953 when the United States threatened to bomb China and use atomic bombs in Korea itself, the negotiations were reopened at Panmunjom. Neither side gained much in the armistice signed between North Korea and the United Nations on July 27, 1953. The border, protected by a demilitarized zone, was put back near the 38th parallel.

The Korean peace was no “victory” for the United States. The American dead had numbered 35,000. But at least the immediate threat of an atomic war was removed. This was a kind of victory for humanity.

**A new foreign policy**

For his Secretary of State Ike chose John Foster Dulles, a leading Washington lawyer. The chief Republican spokesman on foreign policy, Dulles had negotiated the
United States–Japanese peace treaty. Now, with the end of the Korean War, Eisenhower and Dulles could turn to reshaping the nation’s foreign policy. Ike believed in balancing the budget, and this meant spending less money on defense. The result was a “New Look” for the armed forces, which reduced their size. Many units were brought back to the United States to serve as a “mobile strategic reserve.”

Because of these cutbacks, the national defense depended more on the atomic bomb. In 1952 the United States had successfully tested a new kind of atomic bomb—the hydrogen bomb (H-bomb). This was 500 times more powerful than the bomb exploded over Hiroshima. Russia followed with its own H-bomb in 1953. Secretary of State Dulles now threatened “massive retaliation” against the Soviet Union or Communist China if they attacked any country. It was necessary, he warned, to go “to the brink of war” to preserve the peace of the world. “Brinkmanship,” his critics called this policy.

At first Dulles wanted not only to “contain” communism but also to turn back the tide. He said we were going to remove the Seventh Fleet from the
Formosa Strait. This would “unleash” Chiang to attack the Communist Chinese mainland from Taiwan. We would also free all the “captive peoples” still under Soviet rule. In time, when Dulles saw the facts of life, he would give up these grandiose visions.

War in Indochina

But before that time there would be some dangerous moments. The first came on another, larger peninsula that, like Korea, also bordered on Communist China. This peninsula, in Southeast Asia, was known as Indochina. In the part called Vietnam, there was a fierce struggle. At the fall of Japan in 1945, Vietnam had been liberated from the Japanese empire by forces led by a Vietnamese Communist named Ho Chi Minh. Even France had recognized him as head of an independent state—the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. To win that recognition, Ho had allowed the French to send in 15,000 soldiers. Then the French began to become difficult. Like other old imperial powers after World War II, France, even including its Communists, wanted to hold onto its former colonies. Now the French moved to bring down Ho and replace
him with their own puppet. In 1947 Ho and his Viet Minh troops took to the hills.

After the fall of China to the Communists, the United States began to view Vietnam as a bulwark needed to “contain” the Communists. The French resistance to Communist forces in Vietnam, it seemed, was part of the large battle against Communist advances that we were then fighting in Korea. In 1950 the United States began helping the French with money and arms. In 1953 Eisenhower asked $60 million for such aid. And by 1954 the United States was bearing 80 percent of the cost of the war between the French and the Communists in Vietnam.

But the struggle was going badly. As the end of the Korean War approached, the Chinese Communists increased their help to the Communist Viet Minh troops. In a great push to defeat the French, these troops trapped a large French force at Dienbienphu.

Reader’s note: A map of Vietnam, which appears later in the text, shows the Indochina Peninsula. Indochina included Vietnam, a narrow stretch of land along the South China Sea. It also consisted of Cambodia in the south, Thailand in the west, and Laos, which is
bordered by Vietnam in the east and Thailand in the west. The map also helps locate Dienbienphu in the northwestern part of what would soon be North Vietnam. End of note.

Many in the United States government wanted to assist the French by an air strike around Dienbienphu. Ike disagreed. He wanted some sort of joint move with other nations so that the United States would not seem to be fighting to put back the old colonial system. The British government warned that it would not support such an action because it might lead to general war in the Far East. Leaders in Congress, also fearing a larger war, were cool to the idea. For the moment, plans to use American forces in Indochina were abandoned.

On May 8, 1954, the day after the fall of Dienbienphu, a conference opened in Geneva, Switzerland, to settle the Indochina question. The great powers—France, Great Britain, the Soviet Union, China, and the United States—attended along with delegates from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. There it was decided to temporarily divide Vietnam in two. The northern half would become a Communist state, and the southern
half would be a “free” government under the former emperor of Vietnam, Bao-Dai.

“Pactomania”

With the division of Vietnam, Secretary of State Dulles feared that all Asia might fall to the Communists. He pushed for a treaty organization similar to NATO to protect the Pacific area. At a meeting held in Manila, there were delegates from Australia, Britain, France, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand, and the United States. On September 8, 1954, they signed a pact creating the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO). They pledged joint action in case of aggression against any member. Cambodia, Laos, and South Vietnam—the non-Communist nations that had once been part of French Indochina—were to get special protection.

This was the beginning of what critics called Dulles’s “pactomania”—the attempt to encircle the Communists by treaties. In December 1954 Dulles took his next step when he signed a mutual defense treaty with the Chinese Nationalists on Taiwan. This committed the United States to the defense of that island. A similar
treaty with South Korea in October 1953 had committed us also to their defense.

These pacts were capped by the Baghdad Pact of 1955, which was also promoted by Dulles. This group, known as METO (the Middle East Treaty Organization), included Great Britain, Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Pakistan. To the Western powers—especially Britain—the oil of the Middle East was vital. In the struggle against the Soviets it seemed important to cut them out of that area. But to avoid provoking the Communists, the United States did not join this pact.

**The European Defense Community**

A further step to isolate the Soviets was the Paris Pact of October 1954. In this treaty the Western powers agreed to full sovereignty for the Federal Republic of Germany. This was the part of Germany that the Russians had not taken over and forced to become Communist. West Germany was admitted to NATO and was allowed an army of 500,000 men to serve under NATO command. The United States and Great Britain promised to keep large forces on the European continent so long as they were wanted by the Western
European nations—another bulwark against the spread of the Communists.

**Undercover operations**

Meanwhile, the United States was also working under cover, through the Central Intelligence Agency. In 1952 it may have helped Gamal Abdel Nasser and other young army officers to depose the decadent and corrupt playboy King Farouk of Egypt. In 1953 in Iran the CIA also helped topple the government of Premier Mossadegh, who had tried to nationalize the British-controlled oil industry. The Shah of Iran was returned to his throne. This new, friendly government gave the United States valuable oil concessions. On our side of the world, in the following year, the CIA helped an opposition group in Guatemala to overturn a government there that seemed too sympathetic to the Communists.

**Meeting at the summit**

Stalin, the cruel Soviet dictator, had filled Siberian prison camps with his opponents. He would stop at nothing to stay in power. Yet he could not live forever. When he died in 1953, a new clique headed finally by
Nikita Khrushchev came to power. Inside Russia there was a struggle to control the government. The insecure leaders sought to ease world tensions. They called for “peaceful coexistence.” On his side Eisenhower, ever since he came to office in 1953, had offered to negotiate all issues. To show that they were now serious, the Soviet Union at last agreed to make peace with Austria and remove its troops from the zone they occupied. On May 15, 1955, a peace treaty was signed between Austria, the United States, France, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union. The occupying troops of all four countries were withdrawn. Austria now became a neutral country—free of the fear of becoming a Soviet satellite. Then the Soviets proposed a “summit” conference. Each country would send its chief of state to discuss the issues between Russia and the West. Dulles opposed this, but the President overrode him.

The heads of government of the United States, the USSR, Britain, and France met in Geneva, Switzerland, in July 1955. President Eisenhower proposed that there should be “open skies” so that each nation could inspect the other by aerial photography. This was to protect each nation from the chance—and the fear—of
massive surprise attack. But the Russians turned down any kind of inspection. In fact, the conference brought no solid results. Still, the optimistic Ike hoped that it might be a beginning of a better understanding between East and West. Anyway, even without Soviet permission, the United States soon began spy flights over Russia by the new model U-2, which could fly 13 1/2 miles in the air, higher than any plane before.

Section 1 Review


Adlai Stevenson: Democratic candidate who was defeated in the presidential election of 1952

John Foster Dulles: President Eisenhower’s Secretary of State

H-bombs: refers to hydrogen bombs that were far more destructive than atomic bombs
Ho Chi Minh: Vietnamese Communist who led the fight, first against the Japanese and next against the French, in Vietnam

SEATO: acronym for Southeast Asia Treaty Organization, which was formed in 1954 to protect the Pacific area from aggression.

Baghdad Pact: agreement signed by the Middle East Treaty Organization

Paris Pact of 1954: treaty in which Western powers gave full sovereignty to West Germany

King Farouk: king of Egypt who was deposed in 1952

Premier Mossadegh: premier of Iran who was overthrown in 1953

Nikita Khrushchev: leader of the Soviet government shortly after Stalin’s death

U-2: a high-flying spy plane

2. Locate: Korean demilitarized zone, Vietnam, Dienbienphu, Cambodia, Laos, Iran.
3. Describe the candidates, issues, and results of the presidential election of 1952.

In 1952, Republican Eisenhower, known for his grin as well as his war record, ran against the eloquent, intellectual Stevenson. The main foreign-policy issues concerned the spread of communism, the “fall” of China, and the war in Korea. Domestic issues included the Republican calls for a balanced
budget, decreased national debt, and honesty in government. Eisenhower won a large victory over Stevenson, and the Republicans won a slight majority in Congress.

4. How did the Korean War end?

Negotiations reopened in 1953, after the United States threatened to bomb China and use the atomic bomb on Korea. An armistice signed that same year gave neither side much of anything. It put the border between North and South Korea near the 38th parallel and established a demilitarized zone around it.

5. What kind of foreign policy did Dulles first call for? What strategy did he later adopt?

Dulles first called for a foreign policy that contained communism and overthrew Communist governments. He practiced “brinkmanship,” threatening retaliation against the USSR and China if they attacked any country. Later, he softened his policy. He set up a series of treaties to prevent the spread of communism and isolate the Soviet Union.
6. How was the United States involved in the French-Vietnamese war?

The United States sent money and arms to help the French fight Communist-led resistance.

7. Why was a summit conference held in 1955?

A summit conference was held because, by 1955, a new Soviet government had replaced Stalin and Soviet officials were eager to reduce world tension. They proposed a summit and Eisenhower accepted.

8. Critical Thinking: Identifying Assumptions. Trace the career of Dwight David Eisenhower. Why did this record make many Americans think Eisenhower would be a good President?

Eisenhower was a career soldier. He had commanded the Allies in the victory over Germany and then held the posts of Chief of Staff of the Army, president of Columbia University, and Supreme Commander of NATO forces in Europe. His record showed him to be a competent and honest leader who could persuade others to cooperate.
If you are satisfied with your answers, proceed to the next section. If you found the previous questions difficult, however, review this material before moving on.

📖 Reading Directions

Now read Section 2. After reading this passage, answer the section review questions and compare your answers with those provided.

2. Everybody’s New Deal

Many Democrats feared that the return of Republican rule would mean the end of New Deal and Fair Deal measures and a retreat to the 1920s. In some ways the Republicans gave them cause for alarm. Douglas McKay, Eisenhower’s Secretary of the Interior, proclaimed, “We’re here in the saddle as an administration representing business and industry.” But before very long, the New Deal was safe. The Republican President even began to expand some of these measures, describing his program as “dynamic conservatism.”
Reducing government activities

At first Ike sounded as if he intended to undo the New Deal. He aimed to cut back on government—on the size of the budget, on taxes, and on regulation of the nation’s business. As one step to lessen government control of business, Ike ended the price and wage controls imposed during the Korean War. Congress gave him the authority to sell to private industry government-owned factories for making synthetic rubber. The Atomic Energy Act was amended to give private companies a larger role in atomic research and the making of atomic power.

The President had to face the question whether the federal government or the states owned the vast oil deposits thought to exist under the seas lapping the nation’s shores. Twice, in 1946 and 1952, Congress passed bills giving title to the states. On both occasions President Truman blocked the action. With stern vetoes, he said that the offshore oil belonged to all the people. But Eisenhower wanted to reduce the activities of the federal government. He denied such sweeping national claims. He gladly signed a compromise in May 1953. Title to submerged coastal lands went to the states, but only within their historic
boundaries. The Supreme Court in May 1960 set these boundaries at the usual three-mile limit except for Texas and Florida. Their historic boundaries were said to extend 10 1/2 miles out into the sea.

Public vs. private power

The President also had to face another issue between private industry and government ownership. In 1953 there began a bitter battle over whether dams on the Snake River in Idaho should be built by a private power company or the federal government. No one was surprised when the President supported private ownership.

Eisenhower had another chance to oppose government ownership of public power in dealing with the TVA. In 1953 he referred to the Authority as “creeping socialism.” But when asked if he would sell the TVA, the President admitted that it probably was not possible without wrecking the whole enterprise. Still, he attempted to keep it from growing any larger and favored private power companies instead.
The farm problem

While people in many other countries were starving, in the United States the basic farm problem was overproduction. The number of Americans on farms continued to decline. Still, food output went on climbing. New machinery, better seeds, more powerful fertilizers and pesticides, and more efficient marketing made the difference. Farmers were alarmed at their declining numbers. They feared that they would lose their political influence. They wanted the federal government to continue to guarantee the prices of their produce. They wanted at least the 90 percent parity payments which they were receiving under the Agricultural Act of 1949. (“Parity” was defined as the relation of farm to nonfarm prices during the period 1910 to 1914.) The surpluses, they said, could be used to fight hunger throughout the world. But Secretary Benson called for lower and more flexible price supports. He said that the government could never solve the problem of mounting surpluses until it stopped paying farmers to overproduce.

In 1954 Congress passed Benson’s Agricultural Act. This replaced rigid supports with flexible supports. Now Benson could lower the parity payments in order to
discourage overproduction. Farmers were outraged. Since Ike did not want to lose the votes of farmers, Benson did not make much use of his power.

In the election year of 1956, to make farmers happy the administration asked Congress for a “Soil Bank” plan. This was a way of paying farmers for not planting their land. The theory was that this saved the nation’s soil for the future. Congress provided a billion dollars for farmers who took land out of production and used it instead as pasturage or forest. Still farm surpluses mounted, and farm income continued to decline.

The Republicans become more moderate

Although Eisenhower had come to office wanting to turn back the clock, he was always a practical man. He soon saw that the New Deal measures were popular. Most Americans had come to believe that a more active government served the general welfare. In 1954 Ike stated his new view. The administration had to be “liberal when it was talking about the relationship between government and the individual, and conservative when talking about the national economy and the individual’s pocket book.” As one White House
aide noted, “The President’s changed, we’ve all changed since we came here.”

As a result, in 1954 and 1956 Social Security benefits were increased. The system was broadened to make eligible 10 million more workers. In 1955 Congress and the President compromised on a law lifting the minimum wage from 75 cents to one dollar an hour.

New programs were voted for urban slum clearance and public housing. Congress also was asked to provide federal support for private health insurance plans—but refused. Instead money was voted for medical research and hospitals. On April 1, 1953, President Eisenhower signed a bill (first proposed by President Truman) creating a Cabinet Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. HEW was to oversee Social Security, health programs, food and drug acts, welfare legislation, and educational programs. Mrs. Oveta Culp Hobby of Texas, who had been the successful commander of the WACs in World War II, became the first Secretary of the department.
The search for Communists

Senator Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin, now the chairman of the Government Operations Committee, was in full cry against Communists in government. He accused the Democrats of “twenty years of treason” and claimed that they had let Communists take many government positions. Ike, the brave military leader, did not show his usual courage in dealing with the senator. And McCarthy would soon discredit the President’s party. Ike’s approach was to avoid a head-on collision with McCarthy. As one of his aides said, he did not want “to offend anyone in Congress.”

To beat McCarthy to the punch, Ike issued his own security order on April 27, 1953. This widened the area of behavior that might make anyone a “security risk.” If any charge—no matter how foolish or unsupported by facts—was brought against a government employee, he or she would be suspended until proved innocent. This reversed the American tradition that in a free country a person is presumed to be innocent until proved guilty. Government officials were no longer treated with the respect shown to other citizens. The morale in the government service sank to the lowest point in our history. The administration actually boasted that a
thousand “security risks” had been fired. In time it appeared that only a small number of individuals had been removed under the security procedures. But the damage was done.

The fall of McCarthy

Still none of this satisfied McCarthy. He admitted that the Eisenhower administration was doing well in some areas by ridding the government of Communists. But he said that they were batting zero in other areas. And he broadened his wild attacks. He forced the removal of “Communist” books (books that he did not agree with) from United States libraries overseas. In 1954 he accused the Secretary of the Army of concealing evidence of espionage activities at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey. In February he accused Brigadier General Ralph Zwicker of shielding Communists and called him a disgrace to his uniform. At long last the White House supported the army when it struck back. The army charged that McCarthy had sought privileged treatment for an aide who had been drafted.

Televised hearings were held over the charges and countercharges. Hardly had the first session opened than McCarthy interrupted the chairman. “A point of
order, Mr. Chairman. May I raise a point of order?” And over the following months as 20 million watched, McCarthy interrupted constantly with his made-up points of order. He treated witnesses rudely and showed himself an unscrupulous bully. Television exposed and defeated McCarthy, though his fellow senators could not and the President would not. His influence rapidly declined. Only a few months later, in December 1954 he was condemned by the Senate for conduct “contrary to senatorial traditions.” McCarthy’s reign of terror was over.

The election of 1956

President Eisenhower was renominated along with his Vice-President Richard M. Nixon at the Republican convention in San Francisco in August. His fellow party members were not troubled by Ike’s health problems—which included a serious heart attack. Adlai Stevenson had conducted a spirited and successful fight in the presidential primaries. He was renominated when the Democrats had met in Chicago a week before the Republicans. Senator Estes Kefauver of Tennessee, Stevenson’s chief rival in the pre-convention campaign, was named for the Vice-Presidency.
Both parties ran short campaigns, and both relied heavily on television. The Republicans had the advantage of the nation’s prosperity and Ike’s continuing popularity. Stevenson somehow lacked the verve he had shown in his first campaign. Eisenhower swept the country, winning 35.5 million votes and carrying 41 states to Stevenson’s 26 million votes and 7 states. But while they “liked Ike,” the voters still favored Democratic domestic policies. In both houses of Congress the Democrats increased the majorities they had won in 1954. Not since 1848 had the party that won the Presidency lost both houses of Congress.

**Section 2 Review**

1. Identify or explain: offshore oil rights, Oveta Culp Hobby, HEW.

   offshore oil rights: right to drill for oil, which was claimed by both the federal government and the states

   Oveta Culp Hobby: first Secretary of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare

   HEW: acronym for the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare
2. How did flexible price supports and the “Soil Bank” seek to reduce farm surpluses? Were these measures successful?

Flexible price supports allowed the Secretary of Agriculture to lower the price supports for farmers to discourage them from overproduction. The “Soil Bank” paid farmers to take land out of production. These measures were not successful. Production continued to rise.

3. Cite some New Deal–type programs adopted between 1953 and 1956.

New Deal–type programs adopted between 1953 and 1956 included the following: increase in Social Security benefits and extension of its coverage to additional workers, slum clearance, public housing, government support of medical research and hospitals, and the creation of HEW.

4. How did the Eisenhower administration react to Joseph McCarthy’s anti-Communist campaign of the early 1950s?

In reaction to McCarthy’s anti-Communist campaign of the early 1950s, Eisenhower avoided
contact with McCarthy and began his own program to hunt for “security risks” in government.

5. Trace the events leading to McCarthy’s fall.

When Joseph McCarthy charged that Brigadier General Zwicker was shielding Communists, the army struck back with charges of its own against McCarthy. During televised hearings to air these charges, McCarthy showed himself to be an unscrupulous bully, and his influence fell. A few months later, the Senate condemned his conduct.

6. Critical Thinking: Recognizing Ideologies. Why was President Dwight Eisenhower in favor of “less government” in business?

Eisenhower favored “less government” in business because he adhered to the Republican party’s viewpoint that business ran most successfully without government interference.

If you are satisfied with your answers, proceed to the next section. If you found the previous questions difficult, however, review this material before moving on.
3. The Fight for Equality

After World War II, all around the globe there was a new struggle by poor people and colonial peoples for freedom and a better life. As old empires fell, former colonies everywhere suddenly became independent nations. A new republic appeared in Africa in 1957 when Ghana became independent from Britain. By 1965 there were 30 new African member-states in the United Nations.

In the United States, too, black people struggled to be equal. Soldiers who had fought for democracy, and workers who had helped bring victory, refused to be second-class citizens. They objected to segregation and every other kind of inequality.

The Supreme Court rules for equality

Back in 1896 in *Plessy v. Ferguson* the Supreme Court had declared that laws requiring blacks to use separate
washrooms, schools, and railroad cars did not violate the Fourteenth Amendment. It was all right, the Court had said, for services to be separate so long as they were “equal.”

Who had the power to complain if the schools were not really equal? Most blacks were kept from voting in the South, so they had no way of forcing government officials to listen. The Supreme Court had okayed the two-nation South.

In the South, blacks continued to have the worst of everything. In any case, people who are forced to use washrooms and water fountains and schools not used by other Americans are not being allowed to be equal. Simply because they were separate, the schools for blacks could not possibly be equal.

Finally in a series of decisions the United States Supreme Court began to outlaw southern practices and laws that had taken from blacks their full rights as Americans. In three separate decisions—in 1944, 1947, and 1953—the Court declared that the laws that kept blacks from voting in Democratic primaries violated the Fourteenth Amendment. Beginning in 1938 the Court had started to narrow the “separate but
equal” doctrine. It began to insist that what was separate had to be really equal. It outlawed segregation in interstate commerce. And in 1950, after hearing a case argued by persuasive Thurgood Marshall for the NAACP, the Court declared that the black law school in Texas could not possibly be made equal to the prestigious University of Texas Law School.

In 1953, President Eisenhower appointed former Governor Earl Warren of California as the Supreme Court’s new Chief Justice. Warren, more politician than lawyer, was to preside over the Court until 1969. He was to be deeply influenced by two of the Court’s most forceful justices, Hugo Black and William O. Douglas. During the Warren years the Supreme Court would make many far-reaching decisions on segregation, the rights of criminals, and legislative apportionment within the states.

Perhaps no decision of the Warren Court was more significant than *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* in 1954. This case too had been argued by Thurgood Marshall, who would become the first black to sit on the Supreme Court when he was appointed by President Johnson. A unanimous Court
ordered that, under the Constitution, public schools could not be separated by race. Americans had a right to go to school with all other Americans of their age and grade. This was a part of their education. No American should be deprived of that right. The opposite of separation was “integration”—bringing together into one. And the Supreme Court now seemed to say that all public schools in the United States had to be “integrated.”

The South resists

The South, however, resisted integration. In 1955 the Supreme Court ordered that the integration of schools was to go forward “with all deliberate speed.” While progress was made in Washington, D.C., and in many border states, the lower South held out. And they were encouraged to resist when, in March 1956, more than 100 southern members of Congress signed the “Southern Manifesto.” They bitterly attacked the Supreme Court decision and promised “to use all lawful means to bring about the reversal of this decision which is contrary to the Constitution.” In the Senate only three southern senators—Lyndon Baines Johnson of Texas and the two senators from Tennessee, Estes
Kefauver and Albert Gore—did not sign the manifesto. The South was now launched on its policy of “massive resistance” to the order of the Supreme Court.

The first serious incident occurred in the fall of 1957 when the Little Rock, Arkansas, school board moved to integrate its high schools. Governor Orval Faubus suddenly declared that there was a danger of violence in Little Rock and sent in the National Guard. The National Guard prevented the black children from attending school. Then a federal judge forced the National Guard to be removed. On September 23, when the black children again tried to attend school, a white mob forced them to leave.

The government intervenes

President Eisenhower hesitated to involve himself in the integration of the schools. He later said he believed that the Supreme Court decision in *Brown* was correct, but at the time he was silent. He thought that a President should not approve or disapprove of court decisions. Southerners, he said, should be given a chance to adjust to this great change. The process would have to go ahead slowly, Eisenhower said, because “we have got to have reason and sense and
education, and a lot of other developments that go hand in hand in this process—if this process is going to have any real acceptance in the United States.”

But the mob violence was too much. The President finally acted. He ordered the Arkansas National Guard into the federal service so that Governor Faubus could not use them to stop integration. Then he sent in 1000 paratroopers and opened the schools. Still the story had only begun. The paratroopers stayed, but in the fall of 1958 Governor Faubus ordered the high schools closed to prevent integration. They were closed the entire school year. Virginia also closed some schools that same year to prevent them from being integrated. The battle for integration would be long and hard.

**Martin Luther King and Mrs. Rosa Parks**

In the 1950s the nation was ready for the work of Martin Luther King, Jr. He began in a small way and in one place. Within a few years his message had carried out to the world.

Born in Atlanta in 1929, the son of a minister, he attended Morehouse College and received a doctor’s degree in theology from Boston University. He was a
natural leader, American to the core. He combined the common sense of a Booker T. Washington with the impatient visions of a Du Bois.

On December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks, a tired black seamstress returning from work, boarded a crowded bus in Montgomery, Alabama. She took a seat in the front row of the section of the bus reserved for black passengers. When she was told to give up her seat to a white man and move farther back in the bus, she refused. The police arrested her for violating the law.

Martin Luther King, who was then a Baptist minister in Montgomery, agreed with Mrs. Parks that it was time for action. It was time to stop any Americans from being degraded.

The nonviolent way

Although King was indignant and saddened, he was not angry. He was a thoughtful man, and a Christian, and he decided to try another way. He called it the only true Christian way. It was the way of Thoreau and Mahatma Gandhi. It was the way of massive and nonviolent opposition to unjust laws.
He did not tell people to burn the buses or fight the police. No, he said. All people need to be educated in the ways of peace and decency. If you fight your enemies with violence, you will be using their weapons and brutalizing yourself. But if you are peaceful and simply do not go along with them, you will eventually prevail. And if you win this way, your victory will not merely be the truce in a running battle. It will actually be peace. Your enemies will understand, and they will begin to be decent, too.

So he preached to the blacks in Montgomery. He told them to stop using the buses until the buses gave them their place as Americans. Of course many blacks were angry. But Martin Luther King begged and pleaded with them to keep their heads, and to keep love in their hearts, even while they joined the bus boycott.

For 381 days the blacks of Montgomery refused to ride the buses. It was difficult. Some formed car pools. Some were given rides by friendly white neighbors. Many walked miles to work. Others simply did not get to their jobs and had to lose their wages. And the bus company was about to go bankrupt.
In the end the Supreme Court ruled that segregation on buses was illegal. The blacks and all the decent people of Montgomery had won. They had brought an end to another form of injustice. When the buses ran again, every passenger was treated like all the others. Martin Luther King, Jr., called this a “Stride Toward Freedom.”

It was a step along a new path. Many Americans were encouraged to walk along that path in the years that followed. By 1960 many blacks in the South were using this new way to fight segregation. They sat down at lunch counters where they had not been allowed to sit. They swam in swimming pools that had been denied to blacks. And they worshiped in churches that had kept out blacks. They did not fight the police or strike out at anyone. Quietly and peacefully, they simply acted like decent Americans who knew their rights.

**Civil rights laws**

Now the federal government moved, too. In August 1957 the Eisenhower administration finally won the first Civil Rights Act since the days of Reconstruction. It was not an earthshaking law. The main thing that it did was to give the Justice Department the right to
bring suits on behalf of blacks who were denied the right to vote. The real significance of the measure was that it passed and that it was a truly bipartisan measure. Republicans and Democrats working together overcame the resistance and the filibusters of the southern members to pass this bill. One of the leaders in its passage was a Texas senator named Lyndon B. Johnson, the Democratic leader of the Senate.

This was followed in 1960 by another Civil Rights Act, again passed with bipartisan support. It gave even more aid to blacks who wanted to vote. When the Republicans and the Democrats met in their conventions to draw up platforms and select candidates for the Presidency in 1960, both parties supported desegregation. At last the nation was turning back to the unsolved problems of the Civil War. And blacks themselves were in the vanguard bringing about that change.

Section 3 Review

1. Identify or explain: *Plessy v. Ferguson*, “Southern Manifesto,” Lyndon Johnson, Estes Kefauver, Orval Faubus, Rosa Parks.
*Plessy v. Ferguson:* a case in which the Supreme Court upheld the doctrine of “separate but equal” treatment

“Southern Manifesto:” denunciation of the Supreme Court’s call for school integration; it was signed by more than 100 members of Congress

Lyndon Johnson: senator from Texas who did not sign the “Southern Manifesto”; democratic leader of the Senate in 1957

Estes Kefauver: senator from Tennessee who also refused to sign the manifesto

Orval Faubus: governor of Arkansas who sent the National Guard to help prevent the integration of schools in Little Rock

Rosa Parks: an African American woman whose arrest for not yielding her seat on a bus sparked the Montgomery, Alabama, bus boycott


Ghana: country on the western coast of Africa, bordering on the Gulf of Guinea
Topeka: city in the state of Kansas

Little Rock: city in Arkansas

Montgomery: city in Alabama

3. How did World War II influence the struggle for racial equality?

World War II had an impact on the struggle for racial equality because African Americans increased their resistance to second-class treatment after having done their full share as citizens during the war.

4. What did the Supreme Court decide in *Brown v. Board of Education*?

The Supreme Court ruled that segregated schools were unconstitutional and that public schools must be desegregated.

5. Describe southern resistance to the *Brown* desegregation decision. How did President Eisenhower respond?

Southern members of Congress denounced the *Brown* decision in their “Southern Manifesto,” and
many Southerners resisted integration. When violence flared in Little Rock, Eisenhower ordered federal troops to enforce the Court’s decision.


The Civil Rights Acts of 1957 and 1960 gave help to African Americans who tried to exercise their right to vote. In addition, both political parties had worked for these laws, making civil rights an American, not a partisan, goal.

7. Critical Thinking: Drawing Conclusions. What role did Martin Luther King, Jr., play in the struggle for racial equality? What was his strategy?

Martin Luther King, Jr., was an inspirational leader of the struggle for racial equality. He preached that equality would be won by persuading Americans that discrimination was unjust, and that the struggle for equality must be nonviolent.

If you are satisfied with your answers, proceed to the next section. If you found the previous questions
difficult, however, review this material before moving on.

📖 Reading Directions

Now read Section 4. After reading this passage, answer the section review questions and compare your answers with those provided.

4. Difficulties Abroad

Eisenhower could claim no great diplomatic victories during his first years. He had, in fact, slowly retreated from aggressive anti-communism. Now Chiang Kai-shek was discouraged from starting a new war to drive communism from mainland China. The United States talked less of “massive retaliation.” The policy was simply to contain communism and “coexist.”

A difficult year

The year 1956 made clear that the world’s problems were fearfully complex. Secretary of State Dulles’s hope to liberate the people behind the iron curtain had been dealt a blow in 1953. A workers’ revolt in East Berlin and other East German cities was harshly put down by the Communists. There was little protest from
the West. At the end of October 1956 a people’s uprising against Communist rule in Hungary was ruthlessly crushed by Soviet tanks and troops. Without going to war, the United States could do little to aid these enslaved neighbors of Russia in their fight for freedom against the great invader. But afterwards the American people (as they had done again and again) could and did offer refuge to those who fled from tyranny.

In that same year, the Middle East also blew up. Egypt had long been a colonial puppet of the Western powers—especially of the British and the French. Gamal Abdel Nasser, the able young officer who had led the army coup to dethrone King Farouk, was the new leader of Egypt. With the other Arab leaders, Nasser refused to recognize Israel.

Israel had emerged after World War II in the land of Palestine. The British ruled Palestine between the World Wars and during these years many Jews were allowed to emigrate to their ancient homeland. Great Britain tried to establish a Jewish-Arab state, but the Arabs would have none of it. After World War II, the United Nations tried to solve the problem by dividing the
country between the Palestinian Arabs and the Jews. Following the UN decision, the Jews announced their new state of Israel on May 14, 1948, and were immediately recognized by the U.S. and the USSR. The next day Israel was invaded by armed forces from a number of Arab states—Transjordan (Jordan), Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq. But the poorly trained and ill-equipped Arabs were no match for the Israelis. Israel quickly seized most of Palestine. Transjordan took the area of Palestine called the West Bank (because it was on the west bank of the Jordan River). Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians fled. These refugees were to create problems for decades to come.

As leader of Egypt, Nasser armed and assisted raiding parties of Palestinians to attack Israel from the Egyptian-occupied Gaza Strip. Israel’s powerful raids in response showed how militarily weak Egypt was. So Nasser made an arms deal with the Soviet Union (by way of Czechoslovakia) and began importing large quantities of new weapons. Nasser also wanted to build a vast and costly dam at Aswan to control the flooding of the Nile River and use the water for irrigation. At first the United States had offered to help. But Nasser’s new friendliness with the Soviet Union led
the United States to withdraw in July 1956. Nasser then seized and nationalized the Suez Canal, which was run by an Anglo-French company. He said he would use the revenue from its operation to pay for the dam.

Goaded by the border raids and fearful that Egypt’s new arms would be used to destroy them, the Israelis attacked Egypt on October 29, 1956. Two days later Britain and France amazed the world by joining the attack. The British feared their loss of control of the Suez Canal, while the French were angered by Egyptian aid to the rebellion against their rule in Algeria. British and French forces seized the northern third of the canal while Israel struck across Egypt’s Sinai peninsula. The Egyptian air force was quickly destroyed.

All this was convenient for the Soviets. It helped the Russians turn world attention from their slaughter of the rebels against their rule in Hungary. Premier Khrushchev screamed that England, France, and Israel were aggressors in Egypt. Posing as a friend of the Arabs, he threatened to send air and naval forces to Egypt and then even launch missiles against London
and Paris. Once again a third world war seemed at hand.

The United States did not rush to the defense of its allies. Eisenhower and Dulles had not been consulted before the British and the French took military action. They were angry. And they feared another world conflict. Ike joined Khrushchev to support a UN resolution demanding a cease-fire and quick withdrawals from Egyptian territory. Britain, France, and Israel had no choice but to comply, since they were threatened by the Soviet Union and opposed by the United States. In March 1957 a UN Emergency Force made up of troops from Colombia, Denmark, India, Norway, and Sweden arrived in Gaza to patrol the shaky peace. Meanwhile, the Soviets ignored a UN resolution calling upon them to withdraw their troops from Hungary.

**Developing missiles**

During this crisis in the Middle East, there was the threat of a menacing new weapon—the long-distance rocket. This weapon was designed to rise high into the air, even beyond the earth’s atmosphere. Such a weapon could go farther than any other, and it was
hard to detect. But it was extremely difficult to design. Out beyond the atmosphere, of course, airplanes would not work. Every airplane engine then known was driven either by an internal combustion engine (like that in an automobile) that used gasoline to turn a propeller, or by a jet engine that pushed ahead by burning gases. Both required oxygen. Up over 250 miles, beyond the atmosphere, there is no oxygen. A very special kind of engine was required.

To solve these and other problems of space travel, we needed a twentieth-century Columbus. The exploring spirit that had inspired the first settlers was still alive. A young American physicist, Robert H. Goddard, dreamt of traveling in space. When people first heard him, they laughed, just as they had laughed at Columbus. His idea was to use rockets to push through outer space. A rocket carries its own fuel and also carries its own “air.” This is usually in the form of liquid oxygen to keep the fuel exploding. The rockets exploding behind push the spacecraft forward.

In 1914 the 32-year-old Goddard received a patent for his liquid-fuel rocket engine. In his technical report for the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, he explained
his rocket engine. He said this engine would make it possible someday to reach the moon. The *New York Times* and other respectable newspapers wrote editorials ridiculing his idea. For the rest of his life Goddard distrusted newspapers. Unlike Billy Mitchell, who had used the newspapers to promote the new airplane, Goddard hated publicity and kept his work secret. He went ahead perfecting his rocket engine and finally secured 214 patents on the improvements that made space travel possible.

When Goddard died in 1945, few Americans yet believed that human beings would ever travel through space.

**The V-2 rocket**

The people of England, however, already had reasons enough to know that rockets could work. Raining down from the skies in 1944 came more than a thousand German V-2 rockets. Aimed from launching pads 200 miles away in Holland, they did not carry pilots but still reached their English targets. Traveling far faster than the speed of sound, they fell silently from a height of 60 or 70 miles. Each held a ton of explosives.
The V-2 rockets were the work of German scientists who had been experimenting since 1932. When the Nazis came to power and plunged the world into war, the Nazis had provided these scientists with a secret new laboratory in Peenemünde, a little German fishing village on the Baltic Sea.

By 1944 some 12,000 Germans were making V-2 rockets. These were pouring death and destruction on English cities every day. The name “V-2” came from German words meaning “Vengeance Weapon, No. 2.” It was, next to the atom bomb, the most terrifying weapon of the war because it struck without warning and no defense against it could be found.

The race for rockets

At that very moment the Russians were speeding westward across Europe in their final triumphal march. They hastened to Peenemünde to capture the German rocket factory—for their own future use. When they arrived they found, to their dismay, that the most valuable resource, the rocket scientists themselves, had already fled to the West.
“This is absolutely intolerable,” Dictator Stalin raged. “We defeated the Nazi armies; we occupied Berlin and Peenemünde; but the Americans got the rocket engineers!” Stalin was especially angered because the Russian Communists lacked big bombing planes. Their only weapons, then, for a future long-distance attack on the United States would be long-distance rockets.

Some farsighted American generals had organized the project to rescue the German rocket engineers, the V-2 equipment, and 14 tons of documents for the West under the code name “Operation Paperclip.” They collected 127 of the best German rocket scientists (including their chief, Wernher Von Braun) and signed them up to work on rockets and space travel for the United States. The brilliant Von Braun later became head of the United States Army rocket research. In time, the Russians also captured German rocket scientists who went to work on rocket research for them.

The United States and Communist Russia began a terrifying new arms competition. This time it was rockets. By 1956 the chief of the Russian Communist
party, Nikita Khrushchev, boasted that Soviet military rockets soon would be able to hit any target on earth.

Then, on October 4, 1957, the Russians sent up the first man-made earth satellite. It was a package of instruments weighing 184 pounds. They called it *Sputnik*, which in Russian meant “fellow traveler” (of the earth). One month later they launched a much heavier satellite, *Sputnik II*, which weighed 1120 pounds. This satellite carried a dog, called Laika, to see how a living creature would react to life in outer space. Could an animal from earth live out there where everything floated and nothing had any weight? Laika survived.

The space race was on! The Soviets had exploded a hydrogen bomb in 1953. If they had rockets powerful enough to launch satellites, what would prevent them from bombarding the United States with nuclear weapons? Now it seemed that Khrushchev’s boasts were true.

The early American efforts to make rockets were not always successful. The White House announced that on December 6, 1957, the United States would launch its own satellite with a Vanguard rocket. While the
whole nation watched on television, this much-advertised rocket collapsed on the wet sand. The next try did succeed. Two months later Explorer I, the first American satellite, went into orbit.

**The United States reacts to Sputnik**

Americans were still frightened to see the Russians so far ahead in the space race. According to Senator Henry Jackson of Washington, *Sputnik* was a “devastating blow to the prestige of the United States.” Americans now began to fear that the Soviet educational system which had trained the scientists who produced the satellites was better than ours. In a series of articles, *Life* magazine proclaimed a “Crisis in Education.” Congress voted the National Defense Education Act in 1958. Its $1 billion program was intended to produce more scientists and teachers of science. It made available money for loans to high school and college graduates to enable them to continue their scientific education. Funds were also provided for laboratories and scientific equipment for schools and colleges.

Shortly after *Sputnik* the President appointed James R. Killian, Jr., the president of the Massachusetts Institute
of Technology, as his Special Assistant for Science and Technology. He was, Ike said, “to have the active responsibility for helping me to follow through on the scientific improvement of our defense.”

In 1958 Ike’s already large defense budget was increased by another $4 billion for rocket and missile research and development and for the conquest of outer space. The new National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) would coordinate these space efforts.

**Problems in the Middle East**

Meanwhile, during 1957, the United States was losing influence in the Middle East as Egypt’s Nasser fanned anti-Western feelings and promoted Arab nationalism. Nasser’s ties to the Soviets made his actions especially worrisome. The oil from this region was vital to the economies of the Western nations. They could not just watch the area fall to the Communists.

To combat this new threat, the President announced the Eisenhower Doctrine, which was adopted by Congress in a joint resolution in March 1957. The United States would help any Middle East country that
requested aid to resist military aggression from any Communist-controlled country. Still, the main threat to American influence in the Middle East came from the weakness of the existing governments. So the policy was soon modified to include American help for pro-Western governments against Communist-supported attempts to overthrow them.

Still, the situation worsened. Syria and Egypt joined hands in the United Arab Republic. Violence threatened the friendly government of King Hussein in Jordan. In May 1958 civil war broke out between Christians, who favored keeping Lebanon independent and pro-Western, and Muslims, who supported an alliance with Egypt and Syria. Finally in July the king and the prime minister of Iraq were murdered by pro-Nasser army officers and another friendly government seemed lost to the West.

After this change of the government in Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon asked for help under the Eisenhower Doctrine. Britain supported King Hussein of Jordan with paratroopers, and the United States landed 14,000 marines in Lebanon. The large United States force also served as a warning to the new Iraqi government not to
nationalize its oil fields. British and American forces were soon withdrawn. They had, at least for a time, helped to stabilize the situation in the Middle East and proved to Nasser that there were limits on what he could do to promote Arab nationalism and anti-Western feeling. They also showed him that there were limits to the support he could expect from the USSR. That nation had voiced disapproval of the troop movements, but had taken no other action.

**More crises**

Even as the United States struggled to preserve its position in the Middle East, war threatened on the other side of the globe. In August 1958 the Chinese Communists began to shell the Nationalist Chinese islands of Quemoy and Matsu off the mainland. President Eisenhower declared that the United States would join the fighting if the Communists seized the offshore islands as part of a campaign against Taiwan, seat of the Republican Chinese government of Chiang Kai-shek. Ike sent the powerful Seventh Fleet into the Formosa Strait off Taiwan to back up his warning.

Reeling from crises in Suez, Lebanon, and the Formosa Strait, the United States suddenly faced a stern new
test from Russia. On November 27, 1958, the Soviet government called on the Western powers to leave West Berlin and make Berlin a “free” city. The Russians threatened that if the Western powers did not pull out of Berlin within six months, Russia would withdraw from East Berlin and sign a peace treaty with the East German regime, which then might cut off Western access to West Berlin. The Western powers rejected the Soviet proposal, but neither side forced a showdown.

Relaxing the cold war

To ease tensions, in the summer of 1959 Vice-President Nixon went on a goodwill tour of the Soviet Union and Poland, while the veteran Soviet leader Anastas Mikoyan came to the United States. Nixon and Khrushchev, in front of television cameras, debated the merits of the two nations’ economic systems while inspecting a kitchen display at an American exhibit in Moscow. A war of words was better than any other kind! Vice-President Nixon thought that Khrushchev really ought to see the United States.

In August President Eisenhower announced that he and Khrushchev would exchange visits. Then in mid-
September the President received the Russian leader. While traveling to the West Coast, Khrushchev said he wanted to visit Disneyland. He was infuriated when, for security reasons, his request was refused. The spirit was better when he conferred with the President at Camp David in the Catoctin Mountains of Maryland. That good feeling came to be called the “spirit of Camp David.” The two leaders agreed to settle the Berlin issue by negotiation, and the Soviets withdrew their six-month time limit. They also agreed to continue their talks at a later summit meeting.

“At this wondrous moment,” British Prime Minister Macmillan said, “we seem on the threshold of genuine practical steps toward peace.” The next meeting was set for May 16, 1960, at Paris.

**Collapse of the conference**

The spirit of Camp David was shattered on May 5, 1960. Khrushchev announced that Soviet forces had shot down an American U-2 plane engaged in aerial reconnaissance over the Soviet Union. Thinking the pilot had died in the crash or committed suicide as ordered, the United States flatly denied the charge of
spying. Then Khrushchev revealed that the pilot had been captured and had confessed.

Americans were surprised when the President in a television address accepted personal responsibility for the aerial spying and defended it. Since Khrushchev was already facing opposition within the Soviet Union and was being criticized by the Chinese for not being tough enough on the imperialist Americans, he angrily demanded an apology. Eisenhower refused.

The heads of state gathered in Paris, but they never conferred. Khrushchev bitterly attacked Eisenhower and the United States. He withdrew his invitation to the President to visit the Soviet Union. He said he would have no more meetings with Eisenhower until he apologized. The President again refused. The thaw between the superpowers ended and relations iced over again.

Troubles in Latin America

The United States faced critical new problems even with our neighbors in the Western Hemisphere. Since the days of the Good Neighbor policy and World War II,
the nation’s attention had been directed mainly to the large challenges farther away.

The United States had tried to prevent the spread of communism by supporting governments that proclaimed their anti-communism. But this policy sometimes backfired. We often ended up helping repressive governments. We found ourselves bolstering dictatorships—merely because they were anti-Communist. This lost us friends among freedom-loving people. In many parts of the world, where free institutions were weak, we had no easy choice.

United States weakness in Latin America was exposed by the rapid movement of events in Cuba. In 1958 the longtime dictator of that country, the corrupt Fulgencio Batista, was overthrown by a young lawyer, Fidel Castro. For three years Castro had led guerrilla forces operating from the Cuban hills. Castro seized the large foreign (mainly United States) holdings in Cuba. He collectivized the farms. He freed the country from its dependence on the United States. But he tied himself to the Soviets and set up a new police state. “Cuba, sí, Yanqui no!” was Castro’s popular rallying cry. An eloquent and long-winded speaker, he soon became a
folk hero. He was famous for his big Havana cigars and his friendly manner with Cuban peasants. He outlawed all parties except the Communists and set up prison camps for his enemies. With Soviet aid, Castro built up one of the strongest military forces in Latin America. This loaded pistol was only 90 miles off the coast of the United States.

Eisenhower steps down

If it had not been for the Twenty-second Amendment, Ike could probably have run for and won a third term. Unlike TR or FDR, he had not been a strong President. But his calm and friendly way and his good-humored honesty helped ease the bad temper and quiet the jumpy nerves that troubled the nation when he took office. In addition, he had consolidated the New Deal economic and social programs. He made them all-American institutions when he adopted them for the Republicans. And most important of all, the nation was no longer involved in any foreign wars.

Before leaving office, Eisenhower followed the example of another General-President, George Washington, more than a century and a half earlier. Like Washington, Eisenhower turned his farewell address into a warning
against the dangers hidden in the future. He cautioned against the “military-industrial complex” that was making its influence “felt in every city, every state house, every office of the federal government.” In the future, he admitted, our nation would certainly need vast military forces and enormous factories. What troubled him was “the potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power.... We must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes.” Still beloved by the mass of Americans, Ike retired to his farm in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. He left the many unsolved problems of the nation and the world to a promising young President, John F. Kennedy.

Reader’s note: The map in this section helps locate some of the trouble spots of the Cold War in the 1950s. In particular, it indicates the Suez Canal, which runs through Egypt and joins the Mediterranean Sea with the Red Sea. The Sinai peninsula, part of Egypt, is bordered by Israel in the east and the Suez Canal and Gulf of Suez in the west. Gaza is a city on the Mediterranean coast. This map also helps locate Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon, three countries that border Israel on the north and east sides. Iraq is another country in
the Middle East; it is bordered by Iran in the east, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait in the south, Jordan and Syria in the west, and Turkey in the north. End of note.

Section 4 Review


Aswan Dam: built by the Soviet Union for Egypt

UN Emergency Force: group sent to Gaza in 1957 to maintain peace

Sputnik: the first artificial earth satellite, which was launched by the USSR in 1957

Explorer I: the first successful American satellite

National Defense Education Act: provided federal funds to improve science education

NASA: acronym for National Aeronautics and Space Administration, which was established in 1958 to coordinate research and development of space-related technology
King Hussein: Jordan leader who obtained Britain’s aid when violence threatened his government in 1958

Anastas Mikoyan: veteran Soviet leader who visited the United States while Vice-President Nixon visited the Soviet Union

Camp David: presidential retreat in Maryland where Eisenhower and Khrushchev held talks in 1959

Fidel Castro: rebel leader who overthrew the longtime dictator of Cuba and turned the country over to communism and the Soviet Union

Palestine: located west of the Jordan River; it was a British territory from 1923 until the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948

2. Locate: Suez Canal, Sinai peninsula, Gaza, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, Quemoy, Matsu.

Suez Canal: runs through Egypt and joins the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea

Sinai peninsula: part of Egypt bordered by Israel in the east and the Suez Canal in the west
Gaza: a city on the Mediterranean coast

Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon: three countries that border Israel on the north and east sides

Iraq: Middle Eastern country bordered by Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait

Quemoy and Matsu: small islands found southeast of mainland China and west of Taiwan, in the Formosa Strait


a. Robert Goddard developed a liquid-fuel rocket engine.

b. German scientists developed V-2 rockets during World War II.

c. "Operation Paperclip" was an American undercover mission that brought German rocket scientists to the United States after World War II to develop American rockets.
d. Wernher Von Braun was a German scientist who became the head of the U.S. Army rocket research.

e. Russian scientists developed the first earth satellite.

4. How did the United States react to Sputnik?

Americans reacted to Sputnik with both fear and a determination to compete with Soviets in space.

5. What was the Eisenhower Doctrine? Where was it applied? What were the results?

The Eisenhower Doctrine stated that the United States would help any country in the Middle East resist Communist military aggression. It was applied when the United States and Britain sent troops into Lebanon in 1958, even though no real Communist threat existed. Eventually, British and American forces withdrew from Lebanon.

6. Describe the crises centering at Taiwan, Berlin, and Cuba.

In 1958, the Chinese Communist government bombed the islands of Quemoy and Matsu, which
were held by the Nationalist government in Taiwan. In the same year, the Soviet Union warned the Western powers that if they did not leave West Berlin, Western access to the city might be cut off. In Cuba, Castro led the overthrow of Batista and then set up a repressive Communist regime of his own. Castro’s regime outlawed other political parties, imprisoned opponents, and formed close ties with the Soviet Union.

7. What efforts were made in 1959–1960 to relax the cold war? How did they turn out?

In 1959, Vice-President Nixon visited the Soviet Union while a Soviet leader visited the United States. Then Soviet Premier Khrushchev visited the United States and held productive talks with Eisenhower at Camp David. The “spirit of Camp David” was shattered in 1960, however, when an American spy plane was shot down over the Soviet Union. A scheduled summit meeting was cancelled as a result.

8. Critical Thinking: Recognizing Bias. Why was it surprising that Eisenhower warned Americans
about the dangers of a “military-industrial complex” in his farewell address?

Eisenhower’s military background made the warning a surprise.

If you found the previous questions difficult, review this material before moving on. If you are satisfied with your answers, however, complete the assignment that follows.

Assignment 2

Once you have received feedback on your last submission, complete this assignment in the medium of your choice. Begin by giving your full name, address, and phone number. Also indicate the course title, Assignment 2, your instructor’s name, and the date. Then provide your answers. Be sure to indicate the question number along with each answer. Note that this assignment is worth 100 points. Instructions for sending assignments can be found in the Overview to the course.

Indicate whether the following statements are true or false. If the statement is false, reword it to make it true. (3 points each)
1. Keeping a campaign promise, Eisenhower went to Korea soon after his inauguration to seek a way to end the war there.

2. Eisenhower defeated John Foster Dulles, the Democratic presidential candidate, in 1952 and 1956.

3. Secretary of State Adlai Stevenson threatened “massive retaliation” against the USSR and talked about freeing all the “captive peoples” still under Soviet rule.

4. In a move to halt the spread of communism, the United States assisted the French in Vietnam.

5. In 1959, Nikita Khrushchev took over as Cuba’s leader in what became a Communist revolution.

6. To solve the problem of farm overproduction, Eisenhower supported a “Soil Bank” plan that paid farmers not to plant their land.

7. In 1957, President Eisenhower sent paratroopers to Little Rock, Arkansas, to enforce school integration.
8. When Rosa Parks refused to give up her bus seat, a new era in civil rights was launched in the South.

9. The Eisenhower Doctrine aimed to help Korea resist Communist aggression.

10. Attempts to relax the cold war were successful despite the Soviet Union shooting down an American spy plane flying over its territory.

Answer the following multiple-choice questions by choosing the correct answer: (3 points each)

11. Which of the following ideas is not associated with Eisenhower’s foreign policy?
   a. massive retaliation
   b. flexible response
   c. brinkmanship
   d. the “New Look”

12. In regard to Vietnam in the 1950s, the United States
   a. supported the existing government
   b. declared its neutrality
   c. sent millions of dollars to aid France
   d. sent American forces to put down guerrilla fighting
13. What was the major farm issue in the United States during the Eisenhower years?
   a. public versus private power
   b. rising prices
   c. the need to check “security risks” among small farmers
   d. overproduction

14. Which of the following did not help extend the thinking of the New Deal during the Eisenhower administration?
   a. increasing Social Security benefits
   b. increasing minimum wage
   c. amending the Atomic Energy Act to give private companies a larger role in atomic research
   d. creating new programs for urban slum clearance and for public housing

15. The Civil Rights Acts of 1957 and 1960 aimed to help African Americans by allowing them to do which of the following?
   a. acquire full voting rights
   b. obtain additional job opportunities
   c. attend integrated schools
d. take legal action against the “Southern Manifesto”

16. Who was Chief Justice of the Supreme Court in the case of Brown v. Board of Education?
   a. John Marshall
   b. Martin Luther King
   c. Thurgood Marshall
   d. Earl Warren

17. Which of the following key events in the civil rights movement occurred last?
   a. The Civil Rights Act of 1960 becomes a law.
   b. Eisenhower orders troops into Little Rock.
   c. The Montgomery bus boycott begins.
   d. The Supreme Court reaches a decision in Brown v. Board of Education.

18. What finally settled the Suez crisis in 1956?
   a. the Soviet Union and the United States acting through the United Nations
   b. Israel’s surrender
   c. the sending of American troops to oversee British, French, and Israeli troop withdrawal
   d. French and British occupation of Egypt
19. How did Operation Paperclip succeed?  
   a. It brought German rocket engineers to the United States.  
   b. It toppled the Iranian government of Mossadegh.  
   c. It deposed the corrupt King Farouk of Egypt.  
   d. It helped the government of Chiang Kai-shek escape to Taiwan.

20. Which of the following happened as a result of the U-2 incident?  
   a. Eisenhower apologized to Khrushchev.  
   b. Eisenhower did not visit the Soviet Union.  
   c. The summit meeting between the United States and the Soviet Union took place as scheduled.  
   d. Fidel Castro rose to power in Cuba.

Answer the essay question that follows. Limit your answer to two print pages, five braille pages, or a 2-minute recording. (40 points total)  
21. After 20 years of Democratic leadership, Eisenhower came to power. Summarize the moderate policies of this Republican President by answering the following questions.
a. What issues did Eisenhower successfully use to defeat Adlai Stevenson in the 1952 election? (10 points)
b. Give one example of Eisenhower as a liberal and one example of Eisenhower as a conservative. (10 points)
c. Identify one piece of legislation and one judicial decision that extended civil rights during the Eisenhower administration. (10 points)
d. Why did Eisenhower refuse to apologize to the Soviet Union for ordering U-2 flights over Russia? (10 points)

Once you have completed this assignment, mail, fax, or email it to your instructor. Then proceed to Lesson 3: Mobile People and Magic Machines.