

Ch.19/27The Age of Eisenhower 1952-1961

I.Vocabulary

1. Sputnik
2. G.I. Bill of Rights
3. Missile Gap
4. National Defense and Education Act
5. U-2 Incident
6. Mutually Assured Destruction (M.A.D.)
7. Massive retaliation
8. military-industrial complex
9. Interstate Highway Act
10. Nikita Khrushnev
11. Fidel Castro
12. John F. Kennedy
13. McCarthyism
14. Earl Warren
15. Ho Chi Minh
16. Ngo Dinh Diem
17. Dwight Eisenhower
18. Betty Friedan
19. 22nd Amendment
20. Elvis Presley
21. Marilyn Monroe
22. Richard Nixon
23. Adlai Stevenson
24. Checkers Speech
25. Joseph McCarthy
26. J.D. Salinger
27. Jack Kerouac
28. Arthur Miller

II. Overview

The years from the end of World War II to the end of the 1950s were dominated by four powerful changes in American life. The first was the birth of the Cold War, and the great fears that it created. The second was the dramatic growth of affluence, which transformed the lives of many, but not all, Americans. The third was a growing anxiety among many Americans who felt that their lives were too constricted by the staid culture of the era. And the fourth was the emergence of a new subversive culture growing beneath the smooth, stable surface of the decade that would explode in the 1960s.

During the early 1970s, films like *American Graffiti* and television shows like “Happy Days” portrayed the 1950s as a carefree era--a decade of tail-finned Cadillacs, collegians stuffing themselves in phone booths, and innocent tranquility and static charm. In truth, the post-World War II period was an era of intense anxiety and dynamic, creative change. During the 1950s, African Americans quickened the pace of the struggle for equality by challenging segregation in court. A new youth culture emerged with its own form of music--rock ‘n’ roll. Maverick sociologists, social critics, poets, and writers--conservatives as well as liberals--authored influential critiques of American society.

Essential Question:

- What leads to the 1950s to being termed as a time of great peace, progress, and prosperity for Americans?