



# FIFTIES

**A simulation of the events, personalities, lifestyles, and culture of the 1950s**

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Bill thanks John Bovberg, his team teaching partner, for hours of help in suggesting and pilot testing teaching strategies used in FIFTIES.

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# Introduction

## PURPOSE - 1

FIFTIES simulates life during one of America's most misunderstood, yet fondly remembered, decades—the 1950s. Scholars and laymen since the Romans have written that we are all “products of the immediate past” and that “the past is prologue.” The decade of the 1950s is our recent past, and we of the present are indeed products in some way of those years. Many who remain detached from the nostalgia and trivia engendered by the revival of fads, songs, and clothes of the 1950s have suggested that there are so many personal viewpoints about the 1950s that it is difficult to sum up just what contributions to American history those years have made. To those who were teenagers then, the 1950s were exciting, golden years. They feel those times were filled with “happy people with happy problems.” They remember relatively peaceful years punctuated with rock ‘n’ roll, proms, angora sweaters, and chocolate Cokes. Others who were older and shouldered more responsibility remember the fifties as a decade of trouble and postponement of solutions to many problems. They point to weak political leadership, continued racial injustices, urban decay, Cold War flare-ups throughout the world, and the apotheosis of narrow-minded and dangerous right-wing personalities like Senator Joseph McCarthy, who used the issue of fear of communism to vault to national prominence.

Historian Daniel Boorstin, writing in *Newsweek* magazine (July 6, 1970), was early to advance the idea that to understand ourselves, we need to delve more into “the history of everyday life, of business and advertising and housing and eating and drinking and clothing.” What affects us, then, as Americans and as humans is far more than the outcome of a presidential election, a congressional bill, treaty agreements; or the findings of some governmental agency; or the Dow Jones averages on the Stock Exchange. Traditional history books and courses are replete with political events and dates. Perhaps our values and our patterns of adult behavior, our frame of reference, were fashioned more, as Boorstin suggests, by everyday things around us—television, peer group relationships, music, advertising, movies, pop heroes, language, food, fads, and the like.

With these thoughts in mind, especially the theory of studying *both* political *and* social history as influences on our lives, FIFTIES was developed to allow students to analyze major personalities, events, life-styles, culture, and youth of that time—an in-depth study of a decade which has been labeled *The Nifty Fifties*, *The Happy Days*, and *The Fabulous Fifties* as often as critics have judged the era *The Age of Apathy*, *The Age of the Great Postponement*, and *The Nightmare Decade*. Your students will assess the validity of these labels after being involved in the activities of FIFTIES.

## PURPOSE - 2

Specifically, students will experience the following:

### ***Knowledge***

1. some of the major issues, trends, and events of the 1945-1960 years which have influenced us today
2. the personalities who have shaped both our attitudes and much of our cultural inheritance
3. why many people both revere and criticize the 1950s
4. two differing opinions on the merits and significance of the 1950s; and making a ledger sheet to display the two sides
5. the rudiments of debate as used in the unit-ending proposition on the merit and relevance of the 1950s as an historical topic
6. the basic working definitions of such words as “pop culture” by demonstrating knowledge of some of the best examples from movies, television, fads, and music records

### ***Skills***

1. practicing successful group discussion skills
2. using memorabilia from the fifties to make generalizations
3. utilizing oral participation skills in front of small and large groups
4. participating as a debater or listener; sifting relevant from irrelevant arguments in a debate
5. writing scripts for and acting out some TV shows and a movie from the 1950s
6. writing “pop songs” as examples of music of the 1950s
7. writing Beatnik poetry, advertisements, and jokes dealing with topics from the 1950s
8. comparing and contrasting teenage slang and lifestyle of the 1950s with today’s
9. interviewing people and researching yearbooks from the 1950s and making generalizations and drawing conclusions
10. surveying people about conformity and drawing some conclusions about behavior

### ***Feelings***

1. taking a side on the merits and relevance of the 1950s, while debating or writing an essay with facts to support the student’s position
2. sensing what it was like to be a teenager in the 1950s
3. being in a position of power whose very words of acceptance will earn a “song composer” a great deal of “money”
4. judging the pros and cons of the so-called cultural vacuum of the 1950s
5. taking a stand for or against Senator Joseph McCarthy’s actions during the 1950s
6. deciding whether or not today’s teenagers differ from teenagers of the 1950s in conforming to acceptable standards in thoughts and actions

# OVERVIEW - 1

This simulation enables students to work as teams, panels, and individuals while they learn the history and the “heartbeat” of the 1950s. The phases are broken down and separated to allow for teacher options, yet they are designed for continuity and comprehension. *The number of days in parentheses represent optimum length. Obviously the simulation can be shortened by deleting activities.*

## **Introductory Phase (2 days)**

Students read the Student Guide to begin the simulation and to be motivated to do high quality work on the activities which follow. An HISTORICAL BACKGROUND sheet with discussion questions lays the foundation for trends of the 1950s and gives students the historical prospective. Students are given Brownie Points and COLLECTING MEMORABILIA sheets, which are explained.



## **Phase 1: The Big Events (4 days)**

Forming groups of six students each, the class writes historical summaries in journalistic form to be pieced together in a classroom “newspaper.” Each group does two of the 12 events and orally presents its summaries before pasting its work on the class newspaper. Interwoven before, during, and after the lesson are historical news flashes, brief headlines covering the lighter side of the fifties’ history. The last activity for this phase is a document analysis of Senator Joseph McCarthy’s contribution to the era.

## **Phase 2: Lifestyle (10 days)**

Perhaps the real “meat” of FIFTIES is best expressed in the activities of this phase. An evaluation of a series of BIG EVENTS, in which students answer follow-up questions, is used as a springboard to following activities. In succession, students creatively rework dialogue for Peanuts cartoons, survey people on conformity, compose Beatnik poetry, write jokes as Shelley Berman or Mort Sahl might have done, draw doodles, and, as a finale to this phase, schedule an ideal family weekend in the fifties.

## **Phase 3: Mass Media Impact (6 days)**

In order to deal with cultural history, students are divided into Cultural Committees (by your dictation); they first write and then perform scenarios from some of the 1950s’ most popular TV shows: *What’s My Line?*, *Ozzie and Harriet*, and *Dragnet*. One committee silently acts out one of the most influential movies of the decade, *Rebel Without a Cause*, starring James Dean, while a narrator dramatically tells the story of teenage growing problems in *Rebel* .... Another committee shares the responsibilities of composing pop tunes of the fifties and allows these to be judged by a Jukebox Jury (a panel of “celebrities” gives each tune either a “hit” or a “miss”).

## OVERVIEW - 2

### Phase 4: Krazy, Mixed-Up Kids (6 days)

Students deal with their teenage counterparts of the fifties. They begin by reading an overview and having themselves photographed on “class

picture day” as a socie, normie, or weirdo; then they write captions to fit the pose and dress of their pictures. Next, students begin digging into what it was like being a teenager then by a) interviewing people who grew up in the era, and b) researching yearbooks of the 1950s, continually generalizing and hypothesizing about similarities and dissimilarities between the two groups. Then, in a somewhat humorous vein, students draw Task Cards, which assign them brief tasks dealing with the social levels of high school society. This phase ends with a

student debate on the merits of the 1950s (part of a class role-playing activity in which a 1959 senior problems class assesses the legacy of the decade in American history).

### **TASK CARD** **SOCIES/KISSIES**

Write down strategies for a campaign to elect a friend student body president. Use the issues of dress codes and hair styles. Include a slogan and a poster.

### Phase 5: Debriefing (2 days)

After the debate ending Phase 4, students draw up a ledger sheet on the positive and negative legacies of the 1950s as a preparation for a final exam included in the simulation. Students also assess the strengths and weaknesses of the simulation in an atmosphere of honest criticism. A final exam follows the next day.

# SETUP DIRECTIONS - 1



*A graph comparing the two eras—language, dress, values, clothes, morals—could be useful.*

1. **Options** The author recognizes that the 1950s could be taught for varying lengths of time, using many techniques and emphases. FIFTIES provides many options. You can look over the many activities in FIFTIES and pick out what you feel is essential. You may wish to use the complete simulation with all of its activities, but if you decide to “pick and choose,” you can eliminate any phase and just about any activity from any phase. Perhaps Phase 1: The Big Events can be eliminated in favor of your own time-tested activities proven successful over the years. You can shorten Phase 3 significantly by cutting out all the Cultural Committee presentations except *Rebel Without a Cause*. Phase 4 can be eliminated if you feel you must emphasize traditional historical facts and concepts.
2. **Length** FIFTIES lasts 30 days or six weeks. You can shorten it, as mentioned above, by deleting some activities or by assigning more outside work. The author feels that using the entire simulation is time well spent and that each student will come away with an indelible learning experience. If you want to extend the simulation, you may want to use some audiovisual materials. See the Bibliography for ideas. Also, you could videotape some reruns of TV shows of the fifties (*Father Knows Best*, *Ozzie and Harriet*, *Leave it to Beaver*, etc.) and use them as a basis for comparison with more recent TV versions.
3. **Grouping** Whenever you have to group your students, you should probably dictate who goes into which groups. Place one or two of your better students into each group; also try to keep boy-girl numbers equal in all groups.
4. **Duplication** The author suggests transparencies or class sets of materials rather than one copy per student if at all feasible. The outcome of the activity will not be seriously affected. The following materials need to be duplicated: T = overlay transparency; CS = class set; IC = individual copy
  - BROWNIE POINTS BALANCE SHEET (IC)
  - HISTORICAL BACKGROUND (CS, IC)
  - HISTORICAL BACKGROUND QUIZ (CS, IC)
  - COLLECTING MEMORABILIA (CS, IC)
  - BIG EVENTS (CS)
  - NEWS FLASHES (CS—possibly several class sets)
  - SENATOR JOSEPH McCARTHY (CS, IC)
  - ANALYZING THE FIFTIES (CS, IC)
  - ANALYZING THE FIFTIES WORKSHEET (IC)
  - ADS AND COMMERCIALS (CS, IC)
  - CREATIVE CARTOONING (T, IC)
  - CONFORMITY SURVEY (C)
  - NONCONFORMISTS (CS, IC)
  - HUMOR (CS, IC, or can be read aloud)

## SETUP DIRECTIONS - 2

- PLANNING AN IDEAL WEEKEND (CS)
- MOVIES, TV, AND POP MUSIC (CS, IC)
- CULTURAL COMMITTEE #1 (6-8 copies per class)
- CULTURAL COMMITTEE #2 (4-6 copies per class)
- CULTURAL COMMITTEE #3 (6-8 copies per class)
- CULTURAL COMMITTEE #4 (6-8 copies per class)
- CULTURAL COMMITTEE #5 (6-8 copies per class)
- INTERVIEWING AND RESEARCH TASKS (IC)
- TASK CARDS (1 set—cut apart and rubber band Socies/Kissies cards separate from Hoods/Weirdos cards)
- FIFTIES DEBATE (6 copies)
- LEDGER SHEET (6 copies—if you plan to give it to your debaters)
- JUDGE'S EVALUATION FORM (CS)
- FIFTIES FINAL EXAM (CS, IC)
- PLANNING A NIFTY FIFTIES DANCE (optional)

5. **Research materials** No attempt is made here to present an exhaustive bibliography, although the author has done considerable research and reading. The works in the Bibliography are recommended for you and your students who want to read more on the subject and have the maturity to handle some adult material.

6. **Grades and Brownie Points** Hold your students accountable for a grade during the simulation by awarding grade points. (For all the work they do students earn “Brownie Points,” a phrase from the 1950s which meant doing good and earning praise like Brownies, the pre-Girl Scout set.) Students fill out their BROWNIE POINTS BALANCE SHEETS as the simulation progresses. At the end of the simulation you will pick up these balance sheets and curve their totals. You may want to require your students to staple all written evidence of their point totals in sequential order underneath their balance sheets.

7. **Memorabilia Day** This is worthwhile. Use it if possible. Set aside one day and have students tell about what they brought in. Use caution if you intend to leave the memorabilia on display in class over a few days. Much of what students bring in (see COLLECTING MEMORABILIA) is irreplaceable.

8. **Extra creative efforts** The author has learned while teaching with his very inventive team teaching partner, John Bovberg, that very often a particular activity succeeds due to those little “extras” a teacher does to motivate, excite, and arouse students to do their best. Therefore, consider doing the following:

- Whet student interest by using colored chalk announcements to promote interest in FIFTIES (e.g., Fifties is coming—so cool it! or James Dean says, “This class is full of cream puffs!” Fifties is coming ...)



*An artistic arrangement will enhance this activity.*

## SETUP DIRECTIONS - 3

- Try to remake your classroom into whatever the activity calls for. Beatnik poetry can be enhanced if the lights are low, jazz is on the record player, and students are dressed in Beatnik garb.
- Involve students in tasks you yourself usually do. For example, have students help you with the NEWS FLASHES—if you decide to use this activity.
- When the students write and perform commercials, try to videotape or tape their efforts. Make a tape of the best commercial and replay it for another teacher's class.
- Often relate your own experiences from the fifties. Bring in your yearbook, letterman's sweater, and memorabilia. Help plan the Nifty Fifties Dance and show up with a date, dressed in fifties garb.
- You might create interest each day by drawing a doodle on the board and have students try to guess what it is. Tell knock-knock jokes in class to give students a flavor for fifties' humor.
- Decorate your room with signs having fifties slang on them. Encourage students to work up their own bulletin boards.
- On the first day or two of the simulation, play some top hits from the decade. Students should get excited for some of the difficult material which comes in Phase 1: The Big Events.

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The material marked with an asterisk will really help the debaters.

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## Articles

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\* A Teenager's World: The 1940s, 1950s," *Senior Scholastic*, Vol. 97, No. 6 (October 19, 1970) pp. 31-33.

### Books: Fiction

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Wakefield, Dan. *Going All the Way*. New York: Dell Publishing Company, 1970 (a humorous sex novel for adults or very mature students).

### Films

*American Graffiti*, with Richard Dreyfuss, Ron Howard, Cindy Williams, and Wolfman Jack (teenagers as they interact one summer night in a small California town in 1962, the "last year of innocence").

*The Front*, starring Woody Allen and Zero Mostel (about blacklisting in early fifties).

*Fraternity Row*, starring Peter Fox, Gregory Harrison, and Scott Newman (Hell Week on college campuses in the 1950s).

*Lords of Flatbush*, starring Sylvester Stallone, Henry Winkler, Susan Blakely, and Perry King (life among Brooklyn "toughs").

Here are other representative films about the fifties—all made during the fifties: *Rebel Without a Cause* (the quintessential film of the 1950s' teenager), *The Wild One*, *Blackboard Jungle*, *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit*, *April Love*, *Tammy and the Bachelor*, *Hatful of Rain*, *Bernadine*, *On the Beach*, *The Man With the Golden Arm*.

### Television

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### Recordings

"The Age of Television," a chronicle of TV's first 25 years narrated by Milton Berle and Hugh Downs (Side one covers the 1950s). Warner Bros. Records, Inc.

"American Graffiti," 44 of the best pop tunes from the 1950s, and early 1960s. MCA Records (1973).

"Oldies But Goodies," at present in 12-14 volumes. Original Sound Record Co.

"The Button-Down Mind of Bob Newhart," (billed as the most celebrated new comedian since Attila the Hun) Warner Bros. Records, Inc.

"Robert Klein's Child of the Fifties," (R-rated humor about school, sex, nuclear safety drills, etc.) Buddha Records-Brut.

Any album made by Mort Sahl, Shelley Berman, or Mike Nichols and Elaine May.

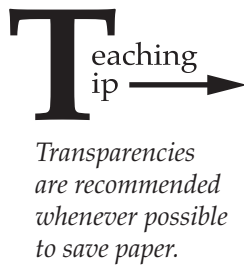
# UNIT TIME CHART

<b>Introductory phase</b>  Discuss student's knowledge of the 1950s  Read Student Guide and HISTORICAL BACKGROUND  <b>1</b>	Quiz over HISTORICAL BACKGROUND  <i>Optional:</i> Hand out COLLECTING MEMORABILIA and discuss when Memorabilia Day will be held (Day 27?)  <b>2</b>	<b>Phase 1</b>  Hand out BIG EVENTS  Divide class into six groups  Work on newspaper  If you are using, hear NEWS FLASHES  <b>3</b>	NEWS FLASHES  Work on polishing the 12 news stories  <b>4</b>	NEWS FLASHES  Present 12 news stories  BIG EVENTS newspaper completed and posted  Award points  <i>Optional:</i> Oral quiz  <b>5</b>
Groups work on SENATOR JOSEPH McCARTHY  Collect work at the end of the period  <b>6</b>	<b>Phase 2</b>  Read ANALYZING THE FIFTIES WORKSHEET  Begin ADS AND COMMERICALS assignment in new groups  <b>7</b>	Go over answers to ANALYZING THE FIFTIES WORKSHEET  Divide students into groups of three to four  Read ADS AND COMMERICALS handout; choose ads/commercials  <b>8</b>	Write, rewrite, and rehearse ads/commercials; due tomorrow  <b>9</b>	Groups present their ads/commercials  Class members award Brownie Points  Present CREATIVE CARTOONING assignment on <i>Peanuts</i>  <b>10</b>
CONFORMITY SURVEY assignment discussed  Work on CREATIVE CARTOONING assignment  <b>11</b>	Use opaque projector to present <i>Peanuts</i> cartoons  Take home cartoons and award points  <b>12</b>	Hand out NONCONFORMISTS and/or HUMOR  Give assignment(s) in above handouts  If possible, present some Beatnik poetry and Mort Sahl humor  <b>13</b>	Go over CONFORMITY SURVEY  Work on Beatnik poetry and/or fifties humor assignment  Take home surveys and award points  <b>14</b>	Expresso coffee house?  Beatnik poetry and fifties humor presented  Take home poetry and humor assignments and award points  <b>15</b>
<i>Optional:</i> Quiz over the first 15 days' work  Divide class into "families" of four  Use PLANNING AN IDEAL WEEKEND handout; take home assignment and award points  <b>16</b>	<b>Phase 3</b>  Read MOVIES, TV, AND POP MUSIC  Divide class into cultural committees and hand out appropriate assignments  <b>17</b>	Work day  <i>Optional:</i> Announce quiz tomorrow over MOVIES, TV, AND POP MUSIC handout  <b>18</b>	<i>Optional:</i> Quiz over MOVIES, TV, AND POP MUSIC  CULTURAL COMMITTEE #1 presents <i>What's My Line?</i>  <b>19</b>	CULTURAL COMMITTEE #2 presents <i>Dragnet</i>  CULTURAL COMMITTEE #3 presents <i>Ozzie and Harriet</i>  <b>20</b>
CULTURAL COMMITTEE #4 presents <i>Rebel Without a Cause</i>  <b>21</b>	CULTURAL COMMITTEE #5 presents <i>Juke Box Jury</i>  Hand out TEENAGERS as homework assignment  <i>Optional:</i> Announce quiz on the homework assignment for tomorrow  <b>22</b>	<b>Phase 4</b>  <i>Optional:</i> Quiz over TEENAGERS handout; discussion  <i>Optional:</i> Take pictures of students in 1950s attire  Hand out and discuss INTERVIEWING AND RESEARCH TASKS  <b>23</b>	Organize debaters. Hand out FIFTIES DEBATE  Divide rest of class into six groups (three Socies/Kissies and three Hoods/Weirdos; choose leaders  Assign TASK CARDS  <b>24</b>	TASK CARD assignments read within groups, then handed in  Socies/Kissies become Hoods/Weirdos and vice versa  New TEENAGE TASK CARDS assigned  <b>25</b>
TASK CARD assignments handed in, read within groups—most creative ones read to whole class  Award points for TASK CARD assignment after evaluation overnight  <b>26</b>	<i>Optional:</i> 1950s Memorabilia Day  Go over results of INTERVIEWING AND RESEARCH TASKS assignment. Draw conclusions about teenage life during the 1950s  <b>27</b>	Debaters meet and prepare final strategy  Hand out JUDGE'S EVALUATION FORM and prepare class for debate  Hold debate  <b>28</b>	<b>Phase 5</b>  Debate winner determined  Discussion on the "bad" and "good" sides of the 1950s  <b>29</b>	FIFTIES FINAL EXAM  Discuss possibility of Nifty Fifties Dance  BROWNIE POINTS BALANCE SHEETS plus all evidence of unit work to be handed in tomorrow  <b>30</b>

# DAILY DIRECTIONS - 1

The following time sequence is based on using all of the simulation phases and activities in a period of six weeks. (See #1-#2 under Setup Directions for comments regarding shortening the unit.)

## 3-5 days before the simulation



1. To motivate students, try preparing colorful chalkboard phrases and terms from the 1950s (e.g., “Fifties is coming, so cool it!” or “James Dean days.” “This class is a bunch of cream puffs—turkeys—creeps—yo-yos, etc.” “Fifties is coming!”)
2. Study the complete Teacher Guide and decide what changes you wish to make to adapt the simulation to your students’ needs. Allow three days or so to duplicate all Introductory Phase and Phase I materials.
3. Prepare a large, blank *Graffiti Board of the 1950s*, (a poster made from butcher paper). Most school activities offices can supply you with this. If not, go to the local butcher shop and ask for a generous slice of 8-10 feet. Then throughout the simulation have students write on this board, at the same time cautioning them about obscene or gutter language.

## Day 1

1. This is an important day because students will get the “feel” and overview of the simulation. Using the chalkboard, divide it into four sections: *Personalities*, *Events*, *Teenager Life*, and *Miscellaneous*. Either write down their responses yourself or have them compete in groups of three or four to see who can fill up their section first. This will allow you to see what they already know about the fifties and perhaps where they got their information (e.g., TV). Point out why most of the information is slanted toward happy or pleasant memories of the 1950s. In reality the decade was not all “fun and games.” Crises and fear were present, too.
2. Pass out the Student Guide and have students read silently or read aloud. (As a joke, you may have them fold their hands and sit up straight to simulate a classroom of the fifties.) Explain any vague parts or review some of the activities.
3. Hand out HISTORICAL BACKGROUND. Explain that the purpose is to gather some background of the fifties because so many trends started in this postwar period. Also explain that this first handout is political and serves as a foundation for the social/cultural experiences that follow. Explain that they will be quizzed tomorrow on this handout.

## DAILY DIRECTIONS - 2

### Day 2

1. Pass out BROWNIE POINTS BALANCE SHEET. Go over points and grades, accountability, and honesty. Stress that they must keep all handouts and all their written work. The latter they will hand in under their balance sheets at the end of the simulation.
2. Give the HISTORICAL BACKGROUND QUIZ. (You can do this with an overlay transparency—or orally—to save paper.) The answers for the quiz are: 1-B, 2-E, 3-A, 4-C, 5-D, 6-0, 7-0, 8-0, 9-0, 10-0, 11-Communism, 12-House un-American Activities Committee, 13-Truman, 14-Milton Berle, 15-Howdy Doody, 16-Frank Sinatra, 17-youngsters, 18-goofing off, 19-radio, 20-acne.
3. Have students exchange papers to score the quiz and then have them record their point scores on the BROWNIE POINTS BALANCE SHEET.
4. If you plan to have a Memorabilia Day, hand out the COLLECTING MEMORABILIA sheet and discuss its contents.

### Day 3

1. Begin Phase 1 by informing students that the next few days will involve mostly the political events of the 1950s. But tell them to remember what will be covered during Phases 2, 3, and 4. Point out that in the classroom of the fifties, presidential elections, dates, and names were just about the extent of material studied.
2. Form equally sized groups of five or six. Try to place a capable student in each. Hand out BIG EVENTS to each student as part of a class set.
3. Assign each group its two events and allow group members to work together for the remainder of the period.
4. If you wish to use the NEWS FLASHES while your students work on the big events handout, consider the following options prior to Day 3:

**Option 1** You, other teachers, or capable students record the announcements on cassettes, using as many of the 52 as you wish (consider your students' ability level). If you use all 52, they should be separated on the tape by intervals of about 1-1/2 to two minutes in a normal 50-minute period over the two-day time allotment. Recorders may want to use three to four different "voices" on the tape for variety (e.g., the voices of Mel Allen (sports—clear, big-mouthed, often asking "How about that?"); Arthur Godfrey (features, lighter news—described as "Barefoot Voice," nose stopped up, slow, deliberate style that caresses the words); Edward R. Murrow (international news—measured, authoritative tones, saying, "This—is the news," and signing off with "Goodnight—and good luck."); and David Brinkley/Chet Huntley (national news—Brinkley breaks sentences into parts as he speaks; ends news in late 1950s by saying, "Goodnight, Chet, that's the news for tonight").



*Directions are found at the top of the BIG EVENTS handout.*

## DAILY DIRECTIONS - 3

**Option 2** Choose only certain news flashes. Read them aloud slowly and deliberately two or three times during the period. Insure that your students grasp the essential information contained in each news flash. *Recommended for either Option 1 or 2*—Require each group of 5-6 students to take notes on all news flashes on several sheets of paper headed as News Flash Announcement copy. Note-taking responsibility can be passed from one student to another sequentially within the group. This minimum should be taken down by the group's note-taker: news flash number, date, headline, essential information.

**Option 3** Run off several class sets of the NEWS FLASHES (rather than one) and allow students to read them during the period if they have time and/or interest.

**A final comment:** The NEWS FLASHES are not essential to the big events activity. They may be omitted, although their information assuredly adds to students' historical understanding of the fifties.



*Be sure before the period ends that you pick up the class sets of the BIG EVENTS (and the NEWS FLASHES if you are following Option 3).*

### Day 4

1. Begin the period with some news flash announcements (4-6?). Pick only the humorous ones if you like (i.e., Hopalong Cassidy, sleepteaching, *I Love Lucy*, etc.).
2. Spend the rest of the period overseeing the groups as they move from "rough draft" copies of their two events to final, polished copies by the end of the period.
3. Before the students leave, make sure they know that tomorrow, at least two from each group will come forward, read the two headlines and articles, and present their contributions to the class.
4. If time is left, present some more news flashes.

### Day 5

1. Consider beginning class with some news flashes for 10-15 minutes (giving time for last-minute polish to news articles).
2. Have two representatives from each group volunteer to come forward and read their news stories to the class. Allow for any student questions or comments before pasting or posting their news stories on butcher paper or simply on the bulletin board. The butcher paper and bulletin board space should be headed *The Big Events: An historical newspaper of the fifties*.
3. When all groups have presented and pasted their articles, compliment them for their work and review what events were used and just how important they are in understanding the 1950s. Ask them if this activity has slightly altered their views about the 1950s.

## DAILY DIRECTIONS - 4

4. While still in groups, have students divide the total amount of 80 Brownie Points among themselves. Emphasize fairness and honesty. Points awarded then should be added to their BROWNIE POINTS BALANCE SHEETS.
5. *Option:* Give a brief oral quiz covering the BIG EVENTS and any news flashes presented to the class.

### Day 6

1. While still in groups, pass out a class set (or use a projection) of SENATOR JOSEPH McCARTHY.
2. Ask the groups who wrote the two articles on McCarthy to briefly relate who he was and what he did.
3. Have students study the handout.
4. Students—working in pairs is recommended—should write out answers to the assignment on their own paper.
5. If students end their work prior to the end of the period, see how many are for and how many are against McCarthy and why. Have one student read a dictionary definition of McCarthyism.
6. Collect their papers and award Brownie Points before Day 7—if students were able to complete this assignment within the class period.

### Day 7

1. Return the evaluated papers on McCarthyism.
2. Begin the simulation's Phase 2: Lifestyle by handing out both ANALYZING THE FIFTIES and ANALYZING THE FIFTIES WORKSHEET
3. Go over the worksheet assignment's directions. Explain that this assignment is homework due tomorrow.
4. Pass out ADS AND COMMERCIALS handout.
5. Form new groups of three to four students each. Go over the handout's Introduction. You might write the seven basic needs of advertising on the chalkboard for constant reinforcement.
6. Have students look over the 18 ads/commercials in the Assignment portion of the handout. Groups choose—first come, first served?—Which one or two they would like to do.
7. Have the groups follow the steps as directed.



*Note well: This assignment is difficult. If you are pressed for time, delete it.*

### Day 8

1. Have students explain their responses to their ANALYZING THE FIFTIES WORKSHEETS. Use about half the period. Then collect them. Before Day 9 review them and award Brownie Points.
2. Allow students to work on ads/commercials for the period. Some groups may want to use an area outside the classroom to rehearse or record.



*Remember to see that students enter Brownie Points on their balance sheets whenever you return evaluated assignments.*

## Day 9

1. Hand back ANALYZING THE FIFTIES WORKSHEETS.
2. The rest of the period should be for rewriting or rehearsing the ads/commercials. Remind students that for two days of work, you have high expectations.

## Day 10

1. Student groups show their posters or perform their commercials.
2. Insist that students take no more than two to three minutes per ad/commercial so that all prepared students can fulfill their assignments.
3. For points you may want to try to have the entire class decide how many Brownie Points each group, pair, or individual receives. This can be accomplished by passing a sheet around the class having students give up to 25 Brownie Points. Then you can take every fourth score, total them, and divide by the number of scores totaled. This average score will be a fair one.
4. Before the period ends, pass out (or project an overhead transparency) CREATIVE CARTOONING. This assignment is due in two days and will allow students to check their weekend newspaper for *Peanuts* cartoons if their daily edition doesn't carry the syndicated strip.

## Day 11

1. Give everyone a CONFORMITY SURVEY handout and have them read the Background Information.
2. Explain the assignment. Most will do their own age group, but as an incentive to survey older people, you might dangle more points in front of them. Stress that this assignment is due in three days.
3. Remind them that the creative cartooning assignment is due tomorrow. Tell them they can receive up to 15 Brownie Points per strip.
4. Have students work on the cartooning assignment in the time remaining.
5. Arrange to have an opaque projector in class tomorrow.
6. Create one or two *Peanuts* strips yourself to get the feel of what your students are doing and also to serve as an example.

## Day 12

1. If you were able to obtain an opaque projector, today's lesson will be easier on you and more visual for your students. If no projector, have them read their own.
2. Collect the cartooning assignment and slowly place one at a time in the opaque projector, having different students read (not their own—cover names at the top). If you did one or two yourself, slide them in the middle of the stack.

## DAILY DIRECTIONS - 6

3. Show as many versions of *Peanuts* as you can, perhaps separating the really clever ones in another pile. If there are six to 10 superior ones, run these through again and have students prioritize them for additional Brownie Points (up to 10 more for the best?).
4. Collect all cartoons and assign Brownie Points (up to five points per cartoon) before tomorrow.

### Day 13

1. Return *Peanuts* cartoons. Scan as many balance sheets as you can to see if students are keeping up and have, in fact, a new balance. Tell the class who is leading so far in the Brownie Points derby.
2. Hand out NONCONFORMISTS and/or HUMOR.
3. Whichever you choose, both activities require you to give a clear explanation before you assign them. On Beatnik poetry, have students read aloud the introduction and follow that with some fine examples from Lawrence Ferlinghetti's *A Coney Island of the Mind*. Recommended poems are numbers 4, 5 (religious caution on this one), 8, 9, 22 (a bit crude?), 27 (can be put on the chalkboard to show Beatnik form and free style), "Dog" on p. 67 and numbers 11 on p. 88 and 13 on p. 92.
4. You might tell a few Mort Sahl jokes as preparation for the assignment on HUMOR. Role-play Sahl as described in *The Humorists*. See if you can get laughs. Either way, discuss the sheet and make the assignment.
5. Options abound here. You may choose to use doodling along with Beatnik poetry. Or, for the next two weeks, you may want your students to make up doodles and put them on a corner of the whiteboard.
6. Beatnik poems and jokes will be due in two days. Tell students of your plans to turn the classroom into an expresso coffee house with jazz and dim lights. Encourage Beatnik garb for students.
7. Allow students the rest of the period to create.
8. Remind students that the CONFORMITY SURVEY assignment is due tomorrow.

### Day 14

1. Review the poetry or jokes assignment and clarify any misunderstandings.
2. Next turn to the CONFORMITY SURVEY assignment. Begin by asking students to make general statements about what they learned from the survey. Write these statements on the chalkboard. Ask what categories seemed to bear out or reject conformity.
3. Then go through the six Survey Results questions. Carry on a discussion as long as students seem interested.
4. Collect the surveys, take home, and award Brownie Points before tomorrow.



*You may want to have the entire class do just one of these two activities or you may let each student choose either option. Make your decision before duplicating materials.*

## DAILY DIRECTIONS - 7

5. Allow students the rest of the period to work on their poems or jokes.
6. If you're planning to simulate an espresso coffee house tomorrow, remind students to come dressed appropriately, etc. You should arrange for a record player and some jazz—Dave Brubeck, Miles Davis, Gerry Mulligan, et al.

### Day 15

**T**eaching  
tip →  
*Creating an atmosphere will enhance this activity for your students.*

1. Come to class dressed as a Beatnik. (In transactional analysis terms: Let your child out!)
2. Begin the activity with a short introduction to the poetry to be read. Create a speech using Beatnik slang. Put on some jazz records, dim the lights if you can (or use safe candles), and ask for a volunteer to read his/her work. After the first reader, encourage spontaneity. Allow the "beats" to express themselves as the moment moves them. This session should be an interesting one.
3. Allow the "stand-up" comics (monologists) to follow (or to alternate with) the poets. As the teacher, try to laugh at all your comics. (Perhaps one student will want to have collected several creators' jokes so that he/she can do an entire routine.)
4. If you fear that the above steps are too chancy for success with your students, have them read their own work in a normal classroom environment. *Option:* Either you or a volunteer can read your students' work.
5. Collect all work and award Brownie Points before the next class day.
6. If you wish, make up a test for the next day over material you have already covered.

### Day 16

**T**eaching  
tip →  
*Encourage students to use originality for this assignment.*

1. Pass back poetry and jokes and have students enter their points and add up their new balances.
2. *Option:* Give a quiz covering the first 15 days' work.
3. Divide students into new groups, "families" of four (hopefully two girls and two boys in each family?). Hand out PLANNING AN IDEAL WEEKEND. Go over its introductory paragraph. Allow time for students to read the handout and ask questions.
4. Have students do work on this assignment while you walk around from group to group, giving suggestions and scanning BROWNIE POINTS BALANCE SHEETS for errors, etc. This assignment helps students to sum up the information about the fifties they've learned so far in a creative and probably humorous way.
5. Explain that the one chart prepared by each family should result from all four members' contributions. Students should finish this assignment within 30 minutes.

## DAILY DIRECTIONS - 8

6. Just before each family hands in this assignment near the end of today's period, have each family write all members' names on it. By each name should be a percentage figure representing how much each member helped do the assignment. For example, totally equal contributions would be represented by 25% by each member in a family of four.
7. Take home the assignments and divide a maximum of 60 Brownie Points among each family's members.

### Day 17

1. Begin Phase 3 by handing out MOVIES, TV, AND POP MUSIC. You can have students read it silently while you write on the chalkboard who is to be in each of the Cultural Committees. (See the Cultural Committee handouts. Earlier you decided whether to have all students be on a Cultural Committee or to have only capable ones present the *Rebel Without a Cause*.) If all of your class will be participating, you will have placed one or two of your most capable students in each group with the following number of students in each Cultural Committee: #1, six or seven; #2, five or six; #3, six or seven; #4, eight; #5, six to eight. This allows between 36 to 40 students to participate.
2. Discuss today's handout, stressing the importance of culture in society, even pop culture, which has significant impact on our lives.
3. Have the various Cultural Committees move to separate classroom areas. Then hand out the appropriate background and instruction sheets to each committee. Allow students to begin work. On the chalkboard, put a calendar letting the committees know when they will be responsible for their performances. Point out that each committee will have 125 Brownie Points to divide among its members after its performance.



**Note well:** *The Cultural Committee assignments require creative students.*

### Day 18

1. Work day for Cultural Committees. Make sure students who were absent the day before are placed into committees. Walk around and help the groups with ideas. Make sure there is progress during the period.
2. If you wish to quiz students over yesterday's handout, inform your students today.

### Day 19

1. If you have made an objective quiz over the MOVIES, TV, AND POP MUSIC handout, give it to your students now.

## DAILY DIRECTIONS - 9

2. Allow students to work through half of the period. Spend time with members of Cultural Committee #1, for they must be ready today. (They could be allowed to rehearse outside the room while other students were taking the test.)
3. With 25 minutes left in the period, allow Cultural Committee #1 to set up and perform its version of *What's My Line?* (Cultural Committee #2 could be allowed to rehearse outside the classroom.)
4. When Cultural Committee #1 is finished, you might, if time permits, discuss constructively how its members did so that the groups to follow can profit.
5. Make sure Cultural Committee #2 and Cultural Committee #3 are going to be ready tomorrow.

### Day 20

1. Allow 5–10 minutes for Cultural Committee #2 to get organized and set up. Cultural Committee #3 should be allowed to rehearse outside the classroom.
2. Have Cultural Committee #2's version of *Dragnet* performed. Allow 20 minutes maximum.
3. Allow CULTURAL COMMITTEE #3 to set up and then perform its *Ozzie and Harriet* TV script. Again a 20-minute maximum.

### Day 21

1. Allow 5–10 minutes for Cultural Committee #4 to set up and perform *Rebel Without a Cause*. Allow a 30-minute maximum for this one.
2. After this committee finishes, Cultural Committee #5 should be working/composing outside the room, tape-recording, or getting organized.
3. In the 15–20 minutes left in the period, have the students in each group divide up 125 Brownie Points for this activity. Encourage and insist on honesty. The hard workers should be amply rewarded. As the teacher, award extra points to the group which does the best overall job.
4. Make sure Cultural Committee #5 is ready for tomorrow.
5. *Optional:* Tell students that the day after tomorrow will be a 1950s Dress-Up Day for picture-taking.



*Students may need a day or two to gather together a costume.*

### Day 22

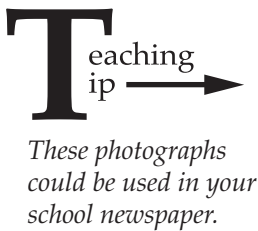
1. Allow 5–10 minutes for Cultural Committee #5 to set up.
2. Cultural Committee #5 presents the *Jukebox Jury* program. Allow as much time as the committee needs.
3. If time remains, have Cultural Committee #5 divide up its 125 Brownie Points.

## DAILY DIRECTIONS - 10

4. Hand out as homework, TEENAGERS. *Option:* a quiz tomorrow?
5. If you are using this option, remind students about pictures tomorrow.

### Day 23

1. *Optional:* Give a short quiz over TEENAGERS before or after you've had a discussion. Go over the handout thoroughly, telling students they will refer to it again after they've done some research.
2. *Optional:* You or a student photographer could take pictures of anyone dressed up today in 1950s garb. They can be outfitted to look like hoods, class clowns, socies, cheerleaders, scholars (learnies). (Later, on small sheets of paper, you can have students create appropriate yearbook captions for all pictures once they have been developed. Examples: Charles "The Freak" Wood; Jerry Lewis; An *Outcast* member of motorcycle club; Miss Teen Angel.)
3. Hand out INTERVIEWING AND RESEARCH TASKS. Cover carefully with your students these tasks because they are valuable learning techniques and have maximum Brownie Point potential. Emphasize the importance of an interesting interviewee, who will articulate answers to the questions but perhaps will also supply a yearbook or two from the fifties and give a running commentary about high school life.
4. Tell students they have four to five school days to complete both assignments.
5. If you scheduled a Fifties Memorabilia Day tomorrow, remind the students so they can bring in what they've found.



### Day 24

1. Line up four or six of your best and most articulate students for the debate coming up. Hand out to these four or six students one copy each of FIFTIES DEBATE and the JUDGE'S EVALUATION FORM. Explain time limits and rules you wish them to follow. To allow them preparation time, you might excuse them from the Memorabilia Day and the assignments attached to the TASK CARDS. Guide them to the *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature* and some of the articles in the Bibliography. Asterisks there indicate material superb for debaters. You may also want to give each debater a copy of the LEDGER SHEET.
2. For the rest of the class not debating on the fifties, divide into two groups labeled Socies/Kissies and Hoods/Weirdos. Then divide these groups again by three so that you have two large groups and six smaller committees of approximately five to six students each.
3. Shuffle all the TASK CARDS for Socies/Kissies and place them in front of that group. Do the same for the Hoods/Weirdos. Tell the students that although most of the assignments are rather tongue in cheek, status levels in school did and do exist and doing tasks

## DAILY DIRECTIONS - 11



*You might ask your students to reflect and comment on labels placed on today's students.*

as a stereotype will allow them to learn about many teenagers of the fifties and what they did in high school. Refer to the comments of Ralph Keyes' book, *Is There Life After High School?*, as mentioned in the Overview. Keyes uses the terms "innies" for socies/kissies and "outies" for hoods/weirdos.

4. Have one student each from the two sides act as either student body president for the Socies/Kissies or head honcho of the Cobras Motorcycle Club for the Hoods/Weirdos. Tell the students that they are dealing with stereotypes as they existed in the 1950s and that these images shouldn't reflect a prejudice against the hoods/weirdos of today. Also, an important fact is that the bulk of high school society then and today, the "normies," are not in this activity.
5. Upon a signal from you, have the respective leaders turn over the cards, read them, and assign the tasks to individuals or small groups. Award bonus Brownie Points to individuals and the large group who are the most creative and complete in doing their tasks.
6. Allow the students the rest of the period to work on the tasks. Don't tell them you're going to switch labels tomorrow. To set the mood, play some music of the 1950s while they complete their tasks. Be sure students put their names on all their papers.
7. Before the end of the period, suggest to students that they finish their tasks at home and bring them in completed for tomorrow. Allow no TASK CARDS to leave the room.

### Day 25

1. Have the two group leaders collect the tasks with names on them and read over a few within their own group (don't let the other side hear!). You, in turn, collect the tasks and look them over before the next day. Select the most creative, humorous, and truthful ones to read later.
2. Bring a little tension into the activity by having the two groups switch labels and task cards. Operate the rest of the period as Day 24. You might want to change the roles of student body president and head honcho.

### Day 26

1. Allow 10-15 minutes for students to complete tasks.
2. Have the two group leaders collect the tasks for you, making sure the students have names on their paper. You should collect all TASK CARDS, band them, and put them away.
3. As a follow-up, read over (or have the leaders read) the most creative, humorous, and truthful responses.
4. Remind students that the interviewing and research assignment is due tomorrow. Go over any questions they might have. Tell them to bring some yearbooks if they can. *Also:* If you plan to have the optional 1950s Memorabilia Day, tomorrow is the logical day.

## DAILY DIRECTIONS - 12

### Day 27

1. Award Brownie Points by passing back the TASK CARD assignments to individual students.
2. *Optional.* Have a 1950s Memorabilia Day.
3. Go over the researching yearbooks and interviewing assignment. Ask students their conclusions about teenagers of the 1950s. How accurate was the TEENAGERS handout? What new information did they learn? How different are teenagers today? How has high school changed? Go over specifics in each of the two assignments.
4. You might want to start a discussion, time permitting, if any of them would want to be in high school in the 1950s. What were the advantages and disadvantages in comparison with today's decade?
5. Take home and evaluate interviewing and research assignments and reward with Brownie Points.
6. Tell them a debate will take place tomorrow on the merits of the 1950s.



*This activity could really add impact for your students.*

### Day 28

1. Allow the debaters time to meet and finalize their strategy and facts, while you cover numbers two and three below.
2. Set the scene: They all are members of a 1959 Senior Problems class listening to a debate on whether the decade of the 1950s had historical merit. They should base their decision on what they hear and not on prior opinion.
3. Hand out a JUDGE'S EVALUATION FORM to each student. Discuss how to use it.
4. Cover the essentials of debate if your class is unfamiliar with the nature of formal debate.
5. Be emphatic about waiting until after the speaker to judge his or her effectiveness.
6. Introduce the debaters, the debate resolution, and let the debate start.
7. Oversee the entire debate to insure its success.
8. If any time is left, allow students to fill out their evaluation forms, due tomorrow.

### Day 29

1. Tally the results from the evaluation forms to determine debate winner. Winning side receives bonus Brownie Points above an average of individual points earned.
2. This should be a review day. First ask students what they'll likely remember about the fifties from this simulation.
3. Have students take out a sheet of paper and draw a line down the middle. On one side head it "good" and on the other side head it "bad." At the top they should write Ledger Sheet of the Fifties.

## DAILY DIRECTIONS - 13

4. Using the chalkboard, have a discussion on the good and bad of the 1950s. Encourage free association of ideas but tell them to write down only what they think is really relevant.
5. With time remaining, tell students about the final exam tomorrow.

### Day 30



*Encourage students to review all hand-outs and activities.*

1. Have students take FIFTIES FINAL EXAM.
2. Pick up the exams and score them overnight.
3. Remind students to bring all evidence of their FIFTIES work to class tomorrow, at which time they will enter the FIFTIES FINAL EXAM points on their BROWNIE POINTS BALANCE SHEET. (Under their balance sheets they will staple their work. Then you will curve students point totals in order to determine unit grades.)
4. *Option:* Discuss the possibility of having a Nifty Fifties Dance (see the handout).

# BROWNIE POINTS BALANCE SHEET

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** As you earn points, fill in this sheet. **Note well:** Keep all written evidence of the points you earn so that you can staple it underneath this sheet in sequential order at the end of the simulation.

[illegible]

# HISTORICAL BACKGROUND - 1

**Introduction** Many students of America's past, even gifted historians, are prone to carve out a decade, label it, give it peculiar characteristics, and allow readers to digest the decade as a full and complete meal. Perhaps that is not fair. The author agrees more with Jay Berman, who writes in his personal, pictorial, and oversized paperback, *The Fifties Book*: "It isn't fair to the flow of history to arbitrarily slice 10 years from it ... it's not possible to clearly describe ... (the 1950s) with concluding that half of it was a lot like the forties and that the other half is a lot like the sixties." To be sure the early 1950s were postwar years, and the late fifties resembled the days before 1963. As you read, watch for trends, personalities, and issues established in the late 1940s which persisted into the 1950s.

**Post World War II** The years following the global war from 1939 to 1945 were almost as difficult and chaotic as the war itself. American service personnel (the lucky ones) by the thousands came home and found adjusting to civilian life as challenging as they could imagine. Most of these veterans vowed they would sleep for a month, hug the first person they saw, go on the wildest binge, and spend all of their separation pay. To make adjustment easier, the government provided each GI with a \$20 unemployment check each week for 52 weeks (the 52/20 Club), hoping he/she would quickly find work and become a private, effective citizen. Many did, but many didn't. Some went immediately to college on the GI Bill, courtesy of Uncle Sam.

**Economy** In the months following the war, Americans found themselves still using ration stamps. According to William Manchester in *The Glory and the Dream*, they also faced food "shortages, riots, labor strikes, and skyrocketing prices of postwar inflation." Government price controls, offset by the omnipresent black market, increased consternation during 1945 and early 1946.

“  
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”

Perhaps the lack of living space taxed the energies of young couples the most. With limited income and a burgeoning family, many former-GI families started housekeeping in a familiar dwelling—a converted quonset hut. Forgetting that large families often become a liability rather than an asset, young couples across America began what became known in history as the “baby boom,” a trend which would last until the 1960s. Incidentally, a record number of marriages and divorces occurred during 1945-1946. Women, having worked on assembly lines and other jobs usually held by men, cheerfully quit to become full-time mothers, and, much to the dismay of women a generation later, loved their homes and domestic lives which revolved around their kitchens. Despite the sacrifices of those postwar years, Americans, generally an adaptable people, got used to all the inconveniences, controls, and shortages, and for predictable reasons, things got better.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND - 2

“

*Television,  
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or toy  
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”

**Society** Once the shackles of an inflationary economy were thrown off and jobs were more abundant, Americans settled down to enjoy being citizens of the most powerful and wealthiest nation on earth. They possessed a confidence not seen since the turn of the century. In his book *The Crucial Decade—and After*, Eric Goldman observed that most Americans, “their zest for luxuries pent up by four long years of war,” were ready to let loose. Big weekends at traditional football games returned and the Army-Notre Dame contest became a classic. Television, no longer a novelty or toy, “sold like red meat.” New fashions, dictated by Paris designers, appeared and were bought as rapidly as salesgirls placed them on the racks. Lame skirts; aprons with sequin trimming; hideous feathered, pleated, and multicolored hats; strapless, wired bras; beauty patches; towering platform and spiked, high-heeled shoes; dresses revealing only 12 inches of calf; and, perhaps the greatest legacy to the next generation of girl-watchers, the bikini bathing suit, were among the fashion items. Americans, with coins jangling in their pockets, jammed into posh restaurants, night clubs, and movie theaters. The ultimate splurge for the postwar, frustrated American might have been a gooey delight called Moron’s Ecstasy, served at most soda fountains, where, for one dollar, a glutton would get eight flavors of ice cream (about a quart), eight fruit and nut toppings crowned with a cherry and whipped cream (those who finished it were eligible for membership in the Royal order of Morons).

**Crises and politics** In 1945 the United States, victorious over Germany and Japan, faced a new and more formidable nation—the Soviet Union. The Russian leaders and officials embraced communism, an ideology contrary in goals and beliefs to the capitalistic countries of the western democracies. By 1946, the Russians had clearly demonstrated that they had no intention of upholding agreements made during wartime conferences. The resulting animosity began the Cold War, a popular term in the post-World War II era, in which the two superpowers clashed in ideological and weapons race battles which carried both nations to the brink of war. Trying to “contain” the growth of communism, the United States fought in small flare-ups and donated huge amounts of financial aid to threatened nations—all to keep the Russians at bay. President Harry Truman’s administration supported the peacekeeping efforts of the United Nations. At best, however, all that these efforts could produce was a stalemate. To J. Edgar Hoover, the vigilant director of the FBI, and to certain government officials, the issue was communism in America, not overseas.

The era 1945-1950 was, for many Americans, an era of suspicion, alle-gation, and innuendo. The slightest tinge of communist affiliation, leftist leanings, or membership in a certain writer’s or actor’s guild was enough for the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), to call witnesses to hearings and publicly torment those persons accused of recommending a philosophy less than “100% Americanism.”

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND - 3

During the 1947-1950 period, HUAC flourished and grabbed headlines almost daily. Congressman Richard Nixon, later president of the United States, vaulted to fame with his investigative efforts in sniffing out subversives. The most famous HUAC hearing involved the testimony of Whittaker Chambers, a Time magazine writer and communist secret spy, who informed the committee that State Department official Alger Hiss had been passing state secrets to Russia since the 1930s. Hiss was found guilty of perjury (lying to a jury) and sentenced to prison. The Hiss case was symptomatic of the fear and suspicion of the times—a charged atmosphere that would continue into the 1950s.

“  
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”

Fortunately Americans of the late 1940s had a forceful, energetic man in the White House, Harry S. Truman, who became president in April 1945. Truman became one of America’s dynamic, effective presidents. His gritty personality, salty language, and sense of what was right for America in the long run, have found critics and admirers then and since. The highlight of Truman’s career was November 1948 when he pulled off the greatest political upset in presidential elections; he defeated the heavily favored Thomas Dewey, governor of New York.

**Culture** American culture in this pivotal period of history reflects the dreams and aspirations of the people. The 1946 film, “The Best Years of our Lives,” mirrored the feelings of Americans in a poignant story of returning soldiers trying to adjust to civilian life. Television, however, replaced the movies as the number one family entertainment in 1947-1948, when millions of viewers squinted at screens from 9” to 12” screens, watching the best and worst of this infant industry.

The undisputed “Mr. Television” was comedian Milton Berle, whose Tuesday night antics (for a \$6,500 weekly salary) caused movie theaters and neighborhood bars to close early. Many radio stars, such as Jack Benny, George Burns, and Bob Hope, made successful transitions to television. Television became so popular that the pace of life stopped at suppertime so the kids could watch their favorite show, “Howdy Doody,” a freckle-faced marionette. He delighted viewers as they champed away on TV dinners, a frozen food business created to fill an insatiable addiction to the “tube.”

Those who wrote for TV and the film industry seemed to dote on what the public wanted—escapism. Escapism became the essential ingredient in bestselling books in the postwar years (e.g., *Forever Amber*, adventure, intrigue, and romance; *The Black Rose*, travel, history, romance; and *The Robe*, Biblical history, romance, religion). Composers of popular songs wrote in the same vein (“Nature Boy”) or wrote fluff for movies (“Buttons and Bows” and “Zippidy-Doo-Dah”). Broadway produced some of the most superb dramas and musicals ever staged. The team of Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein collaborated on musical classics such as “South Pacific,” “Carousel,”

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND - 4

and “Oklahoma” and delighted theatergoers, while giving an additional boom to phonograph records. Arthur Miller’s *Death of a Salesman*, and Tennessee Williams’ *The Glass Menagerie* and *A Streetcar Named Desire* added luster to the bright lights of legitimate theater in the late 1940s. In entertainment, the most dramatic and meteoric rise to fame after the war was the ballad crooner, Frank Sinatra, the soon-to-be King of Swoon. Beginning in October 1944, Sinatra sang his way into the hearts of millions of screaming, bobbysoxer girls. The result? Fan clubs, gold records sales, a high lifestyle, which during the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s pop heroes tried to copy.

**Teenagers** In the January 1945 issue of *New York Times Magazine*, the word describing an American youth between 13 and 19 years old changed officially from “youngster” to “teenager.” Since then, youth had its own distinctive subculture which continues to the present.

“

*They were  
conformist  
by nature  
and perhaps  
far too apathetic  
about the  
world outside  
their own.*

”

As a group they felt, spoke, and saw events as everyone else did. According to a *Life* magazine poll on idols, adolescents admired Yankee sluggers Joe DiMaggio and Babe Ruth; actresses Doris Day and Vera Ellen; presidents Abraham Lincoln and Franklin Roosevelt; humanitarians Elizabeth Kenny, Clara Barton, and Florence Nightingale; General Douglas MacArthur; and author Louisa May Alcott. Yet, these teenagers were different. What they most liked to do was mess around or goof off in soda fountains, in old fixed-up cars called jalopies, at slumber parties, and even at school. They were conformist by nature and perhaps far too apathetic about the world outside their own. (On a Purdue University survey, most teenagers were more concerned with having a good figure, a good build, or acne than they were about nuclear disaster or war in the Middle East.) Rolled-up blue jeans, penny loafers, shirts not tucked in, and varsity letterman sweaters along with milk shakes, football rallies and games, juke boxes, and smooching were the “in” things for teenagers in the late 1940s.

**Conclusion** The last half of the 1940s is the time to begin studying the 1950s. To understand the 1950s, we must know what events, history makers, trends, and fads influenced those years. When 1950 began, forces were already at work which would set the tone, pace, and quality for the decade. The Cold War was just heating up. Communism, espionage, and subversion were issues about to consume even more newspaper space. Most Americans’ goals were prosperity, peace, and the desire for them to continue. Aggressive leadership under Roosevelt and Truman would fade in 1952 to a more passive president, Dwight D. Eisenhower, a factor, perhaps, in the rise of political apathy throughout the fifties. Teenage conformity and the adulation of seemingly untalented musical pop stars would reach new heights. Later historians and journalists, because of American youth’s seeming acceptance of the status quo, would label these years “The Age of Apathy,” containing a “Silent Generation.”

# HISTORICAL BACKGROUND QUIZ

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Part 1: Matching

- |                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| _____ 1. Moron's delight         | A. teenager's car                                    |
| _____ 2. Rodgers and Hammerstein | B. scrumptious ice cream creation                    |
| _____ 3. jalopy                  | C. U.S.'s foreign policy toward communism after 1947 |
| _____ 4. containment             | D. GI's entitlement for one year                     |
| _____ 5. 52/20                   | E. successful Broadway playwriting team              |

## Part 2: True/False (a + for true and an 0 for false)

- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. The Cold War and its resultant ideological struggle was staged between the United States and Germany.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Young couples in the 1945-1950 ear usually decided to have smaller families.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Movies withstood a challenge from TV and remained #1 in American entertainment.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Americans during these five years were generally tolerant of different political beliefs, especially ones which conflicted with Americanism.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Though escapism was always a popular theme in movies and books, realism seemed to be what most Americans wanted after World War II.

## Part 3: Fill in

11. The political system most feared by Americans in this period was \_\_\_\_\_.
12. The U.S. government's special agency to investigate any subversive infiltration in high places during this period was known as the \_\_\_\_\_.
13. Perhaps the greatest election upset in U.S. history, when he defeated New York's governor Thomas Dewey in November 1948, was pulled off by \_\_\_\_\_.
14. Mr. Television, the reigning king of early TV comedy, was the rubber-faced, slapstick funnyman named \_\_\_\_\_.
15. TV's favorite kiddie show in this era starred a freckle-faced marionette known to youngsters everywhere as \_\_\_\_\_.
16. The heartthrob of American teenage girls in the middle and late 1940s, known as the King of Swoon or simply The Voice, was \_\_\_\_\_.
17. Before 1945 teenagers were mostly called \_\_\_\_\_.
18. During 1945-1950 one of the favorite pastimes of teenagers were messing around or \_\_\_\_\_.
19. In the late 1940s most of the early successful TV comedians like Jack Benny, Bob Hope, and George Burns came directly from their popular shows on \_\_\_\_\_.
20. According to a Purdue University survey, three problems facing teenagers were having a good figure, a good build, and \_\_\_\_\_.

# COLLECTING MEMORABILIA

Your teacher may decide to set aside a day during FIFTIES to have you bring in artifacts—items, things, or souvenirs from the past—or memorabilia from the 1950s. Even if no Memorabilia Day is scheduled, you might search your household, trunks, and garage to locate items from the fifties. Your neighbors may have items. You will receive Brownie Points commensurate to the importance of the artifacts. You can display these items from the fifties in class.

## General Memorabilia

(Up to 50 Brownie Points)

- Davy Crockett memorabilia
- Hopalong Cassidy memorabilia
- Photographic proof of bomb shelter construction
- Newspapers from the fifties
- Korean War memorabilia
- High school yearbooks
- High school letterman's sweaters, pins, jewelry
- Bestselling books
- 25¢ paperbacks
- Magazines
- Clothing, shoes, accessories
- "I Like Ike" political buttons
- "I'm Madly for Adlai" political buttons
- Theater tickets, baseball stubs from events
- Autographs from personalities
- Comic books
- Menus from restaurants with 1950's prices
- Stamps
- Trinkets from cereal box top offers
- Kukla, Fran, and Ollie hand puppets
- Beany and Cecil hand puppets
- High school newspapers and pennants
- Posters or signs
- James Dean or Marlon Brando memorabilia
- Paint by the numbers paint sets
- Pictures/photographs of cars

## Records/sheet music

(Up to 30 Brownie Points)

- Elvis Presley
- The Crew Cuts
- Harry Belafonte
- Eddie Fisher
- Tennessee Ernie Ford
- Frankie Laine
- Peggy Lee
- Dean Martin
- Al Hibbler
- Etta James
- The Penguins
- Nat King Cole
- Ricky Nelson
- Frankie Avalon
- The Coasters
- Johnny Mathis
- The Four Lads
- The Four Aces

- The Platters
- The Four Freshmen
- Patti Page
- Bill Haley and the Comets
- Les Paul and Mary Ford
- The Ames Brothers
- Fats Domino
- Fabian
- Rosemary Clooney
- McGuire Sisters
- Perry Como
- Dion and the Belmonts
- Little Richard
- Dicky Do and the Don'ts
- Pat Boone
- Teresa Brewer
- Jimmie Rodgers
- Danny and the Juniors
- Roger Williams
- Mitch Miller
- The Chordettes
- The Fleetwoods
- Frankie Lyman and the Teenagers
- The Diamonds
- Chuck Berry
- The Big Bopper
- Buddy Holly
- The Del Vikings
- The Flamingos
- The Clovers
- Jo Stafford
- Kay Starr
- Les Baxter and his orchestra
- Doris Day
- The Kingston Trio
- Dave Brubeck
- Gerry Mulligan
- Johnny Ray
- Gogi Grant
- Everly Brothers
- Ritchie Valens
- Sam Cooke
- Perez Prado
- Gene Vincent and the Blue Caps
- Bo Diddley
- The Champs
- Kitty Kallen
- The Gaylords
- Percy Faith and his orchestra
- Tony Bennett
- Bobby Darin
- LeRoy Anderson and his orchestra

# BIG EVENTS - 1

**Directions:** Your group is to write two news stories, one on each of two events described. (Your teacher will assign two events to your group.) Divide your group membership into two subgroups, choose an editor for each subgroup, and give each subgroup one event. Then each subgroup works together to write its news story, which must have three elements—a headline, a news lead, and a body. The headline catches the reader’s eye and mind; the news lead is a 25- to 30-word sentence containing the five Ws and one H that give the story’s essential meaning; the body elaborates on the main facts briefly presented in the news lead.

## Five Ws and one H


- **Who:** person(s) directly involved in the action
- **What:** thing that happened (or is about to happen)
- **When:** time at which action took place
- **Where:** place where action took place
- **Why:** reason the action took place
- **How:** way the action was planned, executed, or stopped

Each subgroup member should first work alone and write a news story. Then the subgroup convenes, chooses its best news story, and polishes it. Next the two subgroups’ editors exchange their best work and evaluate it, offering revision suggestions. Finally, each subgroup rewrites its news story.

**Format:** Each subgroup’s final news story must be neatly typed or printed on one side of an 8-1/2”x11” sheet with the headline moving across the width. All 12 news stories will then be displayed at the front of the room so that all class members can read them.

**Grading:** Each group receives 80 Brownie Points for its work on its two news stories. Members should discuss among themselves how to divide the 80 points. In case of disagreement, the editors make the final decision.

## Big Events



*Senator  
Joseph  
McCarthy’s  
Lincoln  
Day  
speech*

**Event No. 1** Senator Joseph McCarthy’s Lincoln Day speech, February 9, 1950: said U.S. State Department was “thoroughly infested” with communist subversives ... had list of 205 names ... speech made at Women’s Republican Club in Wheeling, West Virginia ... shocked audience ... communism fear in U.S. since 1947 ... Congressional committees grabbing headlines ... as a campaign issue for 1952 election ... timing for McCarthy was perfect ... fear of Reds widespread ... electrified public the next few days ... McCarthy became crusader to many scared Americans ... he was symbol ... charged many government employees, using accusation as only “proof” ... ruined many careers and families of accused ... trimmed list from 205 to 57 ... McCarthy headed committee in Congress for four years ... great power and influence until 1954 ... history has mixed feelings about McCarthy ... Did he play upon the fear and suspicions of American people? He used smear tactics and reckless charges to heighten suspicion ... called “McCarthyism” ... yet few communists were found in State Department ... hero or goat?

## BIG EVENTS - 2



### *Korean War*

**Event No. 2** Korean War, June 25, 1950, to July 27, 1953: Never called a “war” but a “police action” ... cost Americans \$22 billion, 25,000 dead, 115,000 other casualties ... critics called it “that war in Korea” ... started when North Korean troops, trying to unify Korea, crossed 38th parallel into South Korea ... figured South Korea outside of U.S. defensive perimeter ... test also of U.S. “containment” policy ... United Nations with USSR absent voted to send troops to stop aggression ... idea of limited war not full-blown like World War II ... President Truman sent troops immediately; General Douglas MacArthur appointed supreme commander ... early losses for United Nations troops ... pinned around southeast tip near Seoul ... then bold Inchon assault by MacArthur behind enemy lines ... turned war around for few months ... enemy retreated north of the 38th parallel and Yalu River ... then 250,000 Chinese troops entered war and took offensive ... MacArthur fired by President Truman for insubordination in 1951 ... MacArthur wanted to extend war into China and bomb industrial and communication centers ... Truman felt this was too risky, fearing another world war ... MacArthur was a threat to civilian control of United States foreign policy ... war stalemate for more than two years ... armistice July 1953 ... 38th parallel still divides Korea in half ... contained communism at strategic point ... was it worthwhile?



### *Truman-MacArthur controversy*

**Event No. 3** Truman-MacArthur controversy, March and April 1951: One of the biggest stories of early 1950s ... MacArthur very popular person when Truman fired him in Korea ... hero in Pacific during World War II and first year in the Korean War ... Truman’s decision unpopular during the early 1950s ... hanged in effigy ... booed ... flags flown at half mast ... wisecrack by one critic, “I’m going to have a Truman beer. You know, just like any ordinary beer except it hasn’t got a head” ... controversy over issue of whether MacArthur could make own decisions on conduct of war (foreign policy), some feeling that the military was closer to war and more knowledgeable than civilians in Washington, D.C. ... Truman not about to let “upstart” make important decisions ... MacArthur wanted to extend Korean War by bombing strategic sites in China, which MacArthur saw as a future threat to the United States of inestimable size ... at that time United Nations’ troops had briefly turned the war around .. Chinese troops (250,000) entered the war and blunted MacArthur’s success ... Truman and advisers felt MacArthur’s bold plan was too risky ... age of nuclear bombs ... dangerous ... USSR had A-bomb ... Secretary of State George Marshall expressed Washington, D.C., feeling: “The wrong war, at the wrong place, at the wrong time, and with the wrong enemy” ... World War III ... nuclear holocaust, must be avoided ... MacArthur (“no substitute for victory”) in communiqués said he was determined he was right ... MacArthur disregarded orders ... released announcement which not only went counter to secret peace negotiations but read like an ultimatum to enemy ... MacArthur at the same time asked some congressmen to back his plan ... President Truman acted and fired MacArthur for insubordination on April 11, 1951 ... MacArthur complied and flew to San Francisco ... given a hero’s welcome everywhere ... parades and joint session of Congress ... speech: “Old soldiers never die they just fade away” ... Truman vilified MacArthur for two months ... soon clearer heads realized necessity of Truman’s decision ... issue was who controls conduct of foreign policy—elected civilians or military ... Did Truman use best judgment?



### *Election of 1952*


**Event No. 4** Election of 1952: Harry Truman, the incumbent, chose not to run for reelection ... some scandal in his administration ... Korean War setbacks ... fear of communism ... high taxes ... inflation ... many Americans agreed with phrase makers: “Had enough? ... GOP (Republicans) smelled victory ... two strong candidates emerged—Senator Robert Taft, conservative from Ohio, and Dwight Eisenhower, World War II hero-commander ... Democrats looked to Governor Adlai Stevenson, eloquent and intellectual liberal from Illinois, Senator Estes Kefauver of Tennessee, and dark horse Senator Richard Russell from Georgia ... Governor Stevenson was Democratic choice at Chicago Convention ... Eisenhower easily bested Robert Taft at GOP convention also in Chicago ... GOP, though a minority” party, was confident that “Ike” could break Democratic hold on presidency (Franklin D. Roosevelt and Harry Truman 1933-1953) ... Ike household name since 1944 ... commander of allied troops during D-Day invasion of Europe ... flirted with nomination in 1948 but decided against it ... 1952 was timed perfectly ... “Ike,” as one person put it, “fit the fifties like a glove” ... Ike drew huge crowds ... much admired, yet bland in personality and older than most who had sought the White House ... Ike enormously popular ... Stevenson was quoted as saying, “I like Ike, too,” adding one word to the GOP slogan ... Stevenson was termed an “outsider” and an “egghead,” the latter a derisive term in the fifties for intellectuals ... Ike stayed clear of criticism of headline-grabber McCarthy, while Stevenson called McCarthy “a disgrace” ... Ike overcame a last-minute scandal involving his vice presidential running mate, Richard M. Nixon, senator from California ... Nixon accused of accepting gifts and managed to convince Ike, the GOP, and 55 million Americans on TV (the famous “Checkers Speech”) that his judgment was poor, but his integrity was unharmed. Besides, Nixon concluded, “I’m not a quitter!” ... Ike was touched and Nixon remained on GOP ticket ... Ike also made a campaign promise to go to Korea, if elected, to speed up a truce in a rather unpopular “war” ... by 11 p.m. on election eve Americans knew Ike was the new president ... Ike was elected by a landslide—electoral vote, 442-89; popular vote, 34 million-27.5 million ... at 11:32 p.m. Stevenson conceded by quoting Lincoln saying, that “he felt like the little boy who stubbed his toe in the dark”; he said that “he was too old to cry, but it hurt too much to laugh” ... about Ike’s victory, one woman remarked, “It’s like America has come home.”



### *Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*

**Event No. 5** Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas: famous Supreme Court decision ... in the 1950s the influence of Chief Justice Earl Warren, a liberal from California appointed by Eisenhower in 1953, was tremendous ... Warren’s court liberally interpreted the United States Constitution ... an example of the court’s liberal slant is the landmark Brown-Topeka case ... sparked the American Negroes’ movement toward equality ... case built up by NAACP against segregated schools ... involved the Kansas constitution and statutes that classified citizens solely on the basis of race ... the NAACP argued that segregation of students by race denied them “equal protection” as guaranteed by the 14th Amendment ... after lengthy discussion the court ruled in May 1954 that the former “separate but equal” doctrine established by the Supreme Court in 1896 was unconstitutional ... segregation, in short, was illegal ... many Southerners outraged ... felt the court was making laws rather than interpreting them ... court ignored criticism and ordered all U.S. schools integrated with “all deliberate speed” ... in the mid-1960s one NAACP lawyer, Thurgood Marshall, was later appointed to the Supreme Court by President Lyndon B. Johnson.

## BIG EVENTS - 4



### *Army- McCarthy hearings*

**Event No. 6** Army-McCarthy hearings, spring 1954: Senator Joseph McCarthy still very prominent in his battle to oust communists who had infiltrated the State Department ... stepped up crusade against the “Red Menace” ... charged in October 1953 that the U.S. Army was “coddling” communists, that there were cases of subversion at one particular Army center ... battle got hot when the Army drafted David Schine, a member of McCarthy’s staff ... Roy Cohn, another McCarthy aide, tried to wrangle a commission for Schine but failed in spite of Cohn’s threat that he would “wreck the Army” ... Ike personally affronted ... Army career man from World War II ... quiet on criticism of McCarthy until 1954 when the president summoned legal aides to prepare case to prove that McCarthy and Cohn were blackmailing the Army into giving Schine an officer’s commission ... in March 1954 charges were made to the effect that the Army was using Schine’s case in order to halt any McCarthy investigation ... in April 1954 a hearing began and television recorded all the tension and drama ... McCarthy’s shrewd strategy of confusing witnesses, his use of “point of order” gave him first blood ... tide turned and more than 20 million viewers saw McCarthy’s demagogic and reckless accusations ... many were frightened ... McCarthy’s legal opponent, Joseph Welch, later a judge, was a soft-spoken, low-keyed attorney representing the U.S. Army ... the “two Joes” captured and held TV viewers for several days ... Welch made Cohn sound foolish ... McCarthy, trying to rescue his aide, accused Fred Fisher, the young lawyer who was to aid Welch, of pro-communist leanings—which was partially true ... McCarthy’s attack on Fisher had no relevance to the case ... tried to gain advantage and smear Fisher ... Welch, disgusted, turned on McCarthy and asked for decency ... McCarthy looked and sounded like a bully—coarse, reckless, and brutal ... American public saw McCarthy exposed as demagogue ... tactics questioned ... McCarthy’s power quickly waned ... in 1957 he died, leaving a confused legacy ... a crusader against evil and the communists or an ambitious demagogue playing on fears and suspicions of the historical period?



### *Geneva Summit Conference*

**Event No. 7** Geneva Summit Conference, July 1955: the Cold War had been on since the end of World War II when President Eisenhower, British Prime Minister Anthony Eden, French Premier Edgar Faure, and Soviet leaders Nikolai Bulganin and Nikita Khrushchev met in Geneva, Switzerland ... conference seen as a necessity after Soviets matched United States in nuclear strength ... nuclear holocaust could happen if any misunderstanding or miscalculation ... most discussed topic was disarmament ... Soviets proposed an agreement limiting size of all armed forces, abolishing nuclear weapons ... Western powers countered with a proposal that a “foolproof system of inspection be added to general disarmament” ... Ike also proposed an “open skies” policy, wherein all nations would have blueprints of military installations and there would be the freedom to take aerial photographs of any country ... Russians rejected the proposal ... the precedent for disarmament talks established at Geneva ... the “Spirit of Geneva” still spoken about ... coexistence replaced the Cold War.



*Hungarian  
revolt*

**Event No. 8** Hungarian revolt, fall 1956: a tragedy more than a fight against Russian tyranny ... most Americans read, listened, and watched as events took place in Hungary ... in early 1956, Poland threatened revolt, but Khrushchev convinced Polish leaders that there would be violence and needless bloodshed if revolt started ... Poland gained some autonomy in Warsaw Pact ... seeing Poland's gains, Hungary's liberals and students staged demonstrations in attempt to change status with powerful Soviet Union ... once started, revolt turned into bloodbath and lesson to world of Soviet strength ... Hungarian "freedom fighters" heroic against Soviet tanks and weapons, but to no avail ... revolt crushed unmercifully after street fighting in Budapest ... freedom snuffed out in Hungary ... refugees escaped to bordering nations or to the United States ... Hungarian cries to the United Nations and to the United States fell on deaf ears ... the U.S. now recognized the Soviet sphere of power in eastern Europe ... the fear of nuclear war was present in the minds of U.S. officials.



*Election  
of 1956*

**Event No. 9** Election of 1956: Republicans had the advantage from the outset ... the U.S. was at peace ... general contentment ... *Life* magazine wrote in 1956, "Almost nobody was mad with nobody" ... Ike looked like shoo-in for renomination ... some worried about the president's health; he had a "moderate" heart attack in September 1955 ... Ike was renominated in August 1956 in San Francisco, as was his running mate, Richard Nixon ... GOP platform stood on its record—praised prosperity, peace, and backed the 1954 Supreme Court decision on integration of schools ... the Democrats met in Chicago in August 1956 and from its three top candidates—Governor Averill Harriman, New York; Senator Estes Kefauver, Tennessee; and Senator Adlai Stevenson, Illinois—nominated Stevenson despite a stiff fight ... Kefauver won the convention's choice as the vice presidential candidate over John F. Kennedy of Massachusetts ... Democratic platform attacked Eisenhower's administration for allowing private interests to use the country's natural resources to enrich the large corporations ... fearing party fragmentation, Democrats took no stand on civil rights ... the September-November campaign months saw vigorous candidates wage campaigns abounding with oratory ... Ike was greeted by huge crowds ... "I like Ike" was still a GOP motto ... Stevenson called for a halt to hydrogen bomb testing, saying radiation fallout was harmful and dangerous ... Ike retorted that the national security was threatened if bomb testing ceased ... voters and scientists were confused on the nuclear fallout issue ... Ike won the election easily: popular vote was 35.3 million to 25.8 million and the electoral vote was 457 to 73 ... an overwhelming victory for Ike, but the Democrats captured majorities in both Congress and the House of Representatives.



*Suez  
Crisis  
of 1956*

**Event No. 10** Suez Crisis of 1956: called "the year of crisis" in American history ... issues which led to worldwide crisis at Suez were complex, going back centuries in history to Israeli/Arab confrontations ... the British and French supported a Jewish homeland in the Middle East ... this left rancor in Arab minds ... Jews had been given a nation, Israel, in May 1948 ... the Arabs went on attack ... resulting in a two-year war which the Jews won ... the Arabs sought revenge, despite peaceful settlement by United Nations mediator Dr. Ralph Bunche (Nobel Peace Prize, 1949) ... for seven years in Egypt the new, bold leadership by President Gamal Nasser, with help from communist nations, led to a buildup of Egyptian war machine ... the

## BIG EVENTS - 6

United States, seeking support from Egypt and other Arab nations against the Soviet Union, urged the British, who were struggling to hold onto the remnants of their old empire, to withdraw their troops from the Suez Canal Zone ... Secretary of State John Foster Dulles promoted a \$70-million loan to the Egyptians to build a much-needed dam at Aswan on the historic Nile River ... overtures by the U.S. failed, as Nasser, rankled by Jewish success and U.S. support of Israel, turned to the communists for aid and for weapons ... in 1956 relations were strained between the U.S. and Egypt ... Dulles withdrew financial help ... Nasser saw this withdrawal as an attempt to weaken his control in Egypt ... Nasser boldly nationalized the strategic and economically important Suez Canal ... the stunned British condemned the action because the British economy was tied to canal travel ... in October the United Nations Security Council considered the problem ... the Soviets vetoed the United Nations' resolutions to allow for international control ... veto prompted the British and French to seize the canal from Egypt ... on October 29, 1956, the Israeli Army, supported by British and French troops, invaded the Sinai Peninsula, and fighting began ... the U.S. was forced to take sides ... Ike's administration was in a dilemma—any U.S. support of seizure of the canal would be branded “imperialistic” by Russians ... moderation prevailed ... Eisenhower pushed the decision on the United Nations General Assembly ... on November 6, 1956, embarrassed and pressured by American leaders, the British and French troops withdrew and the crisis was suddenly over ... some effects remained ... the U.S. lost some luster in Britain and France, two former strong allies ... both resented being labeled “aggressors” and were upset that they were forced to withdraw because of a so-called setback in American foreign policy ... this weakened British and French governments ... Prime Minister Anthony Eden eventually resigned in near disgrace ... Nasser's power increased, and Egypt's control of the Canal Zone never was in doubt after 1956.



*Little  
Rock  
Integration  
Crisis*

**Event No. 11** Little Rock (Arkansas) Integration Crisis: the Supreme Court case of *Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* (1954), ordered integration of schools “with all deliberate speed” ... the South failed to comply and the enforcement was slow ... Ike even admitted, “You cannot change peoples’ hearts merely by laws” ... prejudice was deep-rooted and legislation hard to enforce ... in September 1957 the incident at Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, dramatized the battle over integrated schools in the South ... Governor Orville Faubus, a confirmed segregationist and states’ rightist, called out state troopers to block entry of blacks into high school which was a defiance of federal authority ... angry whites near the high school steps attacked and shouted at Negro students ... Eisenhower immediately sent federal troops to Little Rock to enforce the integration order ... for the school year—September 1957 to June 1958—Central High School was occupied by federal troops while Negroes adapted to pressures ... in the fall Faubus closed many schools rather than integrate, but again federal court held Faubus’ act unconstitutional ... gradually schools throughout the U.S. integrated, but prejudice remained.



*U-2  
Spy  
Plane  
Incident*

**Event No. 12** U-2 Spy Plane Incident, May 1960: USSR and U.S. relations had thawed slightly since the “Spirit of Geneva” in 1955 ... earlier positions of inflexibility and hatreds weakened, leading to a new coexistence ... Eisenhower, on a goodwill tour of Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, suggested a series of summit meetings ... Nikita Khrushchev, Soviet premier, agreed ... both fearful of accidental nuclear war ... May 16, 1960, was set for summit meeting, but it was not to be ... on May 5, 1960, Russian news agency, Tass, announced to a surprised world that the Soviets had shot down an American U-2 plane while on a reconnaissance and photographic mission over southwest Russia ... the pilot of the U-2 was Gary Francis Powers who was questioned immediately and imprisoned after denying he had been spying ... Washington officials denied “spy” flights, saying the plane was on a weather research mission and had strayed off course over Turkey ... Eisenhower, realizing the Russians weren’t “buying” the U.S. explanation, embarrassingly went on national TV and admitted the U-2 was, in fact, on a spy mission for the CIA and that he was fully responsible for the incident ... as foreign diplomats were assembling in Paris for the summit conference, Khrushchev “lashed out” at Ike and American duplicity ... Eisenhower, although announcing no more U-2 flights would occur, did not regret the incident, nor did he apologize ... Khrushchev, seeing an opportunity to gain diplomatic points, withdrew his invitation for Ike to visit Russia until an apology was made ... Khrushchev also stated he would not attend any international conferences until the Americans not only apologized but punished those involved in the U-2 incident ... the Paris Summit Conference of 1960 was “scuttled” before it began ... Khrushchev went home angry ... the two superpowers again stepped up the Cold War stares and cordiality ceased ... “brinksmanship,” the policy of going to the brink of war to accomplish diplomatic aims, went back into effect ... Powers was tried by a Soviet court, found guilty, and served several months in prison until a prisoner exchange with the Soviet Union released the American pilot.

# NEWS FLASHES - 1

## Note:

E.R.M. = Edward R. Murrow

A.G. = Arthur Godfrey

M.A. = Mel Allen

D.B. = David Brinkley

C.H. = Chet Huntley



1. (E.R.M.) **February 1, 1950: Truman orders hydrogen bomb built for U.S. security** In certainly a most historic decision, President Harry S. Truman yesterday ordered the Atomic Energy Commission to produce the hydrogen bomb. Truman, as chief executive and commander-in-chief of U.S. Armed Forces, acted within his role as specified in the Constitution. In his announcement, President Truman regarded the “super bomb,” which has 1,000 times the power of the atomic bomb used in 1946, as a progressive outgrowth of U.S. production of nuclear weapons. The bomb is a necessity, Truman went on to say, as a deterrent against future aggressors who don’t intend to honor the peace.

2. (A.G.) **March 1950: Snooze and learn at the same time** New York shoppers were gazing into a department store window this month and watching a beautiful girl sleep. But there was more to it than that. Wearing a strapless bathing suit, Mary Jane Hayes, Miss Washington of 1949, climbed into a window display bed and snuggled her head next to a black earphone sewn into a pillow. What was going on? Sleep teaching! She was demonstrating a new miracle of our times, learning almost anything while sleeping. The inventors, Educational Services, is promoting in a most effective way how painlessly people can learn subjects like French, math, or song lyrics as crooner Rudy Vallee did as he slept. Zzzzzzz!

3. (M.A.) **July 1950: Ben Hogan is back—wins open golf title** After an automobile accident in February 1949 which left him nearly dead, golfing legend Ben Hogan, “Bantam Ben” of Texas, has returned in a blaze of glory this week. Playing impressively since returning to the pro golf circuit in January at the Los Angeles Open, Hogan this week captured his second prestigious U.S. open championship. In the playoff he beat Lloyd Mangrum by four strokes. Hogan, perhaps the greatest golfer since Bobby Jones, is once again “the man to fear” on the links this summer.

4. (A.G.) **July 1950: Columbia University lists most boring books** Certainly more tongue in cheek than serious, an editor of a Columbia University press trade letter polled librarians, editors, teachers, and authors asking for the “10 classics that have bored the most people most often.” Among the winners are *Pilgrim’s Progress*, *Moby Dick*, *Paradise Lost*, *Silas Marner*, and *Don Quixote*.

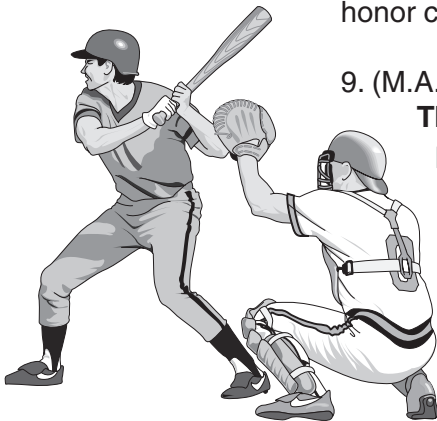
5. (D.B.) **November 2, 1950: Two Puerto Ricans fail to assassinate Truman** Despite heavy security surrounding Blair-Lee House, the Executive Mansion until the White House is fully repaired, an attempt to kill President Harry Truman in his living quarters nearly succeeded yesterday. Secret Service men, lifted from their boring duties, were equal to the task and thwarted the would-be assassins from Puerto Rico, Oscar Collazo and Griselio Torresola. Both are members of a radical band of fanatic nationalists whose motive to kill Truman revolved around U.S. “enslavement” of Puerto Ricans. Listed dead after the incident were Torresola and one White House guard. Awakened by the shots, Truman was unmoved by the event and took his usual afternoon stroll and then went to Arlington Memorial Cemetery for a scheduled appearance.

## NEWS FLASHES - 2

6. (A.G.) **1950 Teens pick idols** Teenagers recently responded to a *Life* magazine poll on idols recently. The persons picked, living or dead, were baseball players Joe DiMaggio and Babe Ruth; actresses/song birds Doris Day and Vera Ellen; film cowboy Roy Rogers; humanitarians Sister Elizabeth Kenny, Florence Nightingale, and Clara Barton; presidents Abraham Lincoln and Franklin Roosevelt; author Louisa May Alcott; and Army General Douglas MacArthur. One professor, seeking insights into teen values, found the “muscle, brawn, and brain” admirable, but sees the idolization of “movie and radio people possibly a less reassuring trend.”

7. (D.B.) **April 6, 1951: Rosenbergs convicted of espionage to die in chair** Julius and Ethel Rosenberg have been found guilty of passing A-bomb secrets to the Russians during World War II and have been sentenced to die by electrocution. Needing only one afternoon and evening to agree on a verdict, the jury found the New York couple guilty of espionage under the Espionage Act of 1917. Throughout the nine months since their arrest, the Rosenbergs have maintained their innocence and the “frame-up” by Ethel’s younger brother, David Greenglass, the prosecution’s star witness. Judge Irving Kaufman, sensing the guilty couple’s place in “altering history,” sentenced them to die in the electric chair in Sing Sing Prison in May. Greenglass will be sentenced later this afternoon.

8. (D.B.) **August 4, 1951: West Point ousts 90 cadets for cheating scandals** The U.S. Military Academy at West Point, together with most Americans, was stunned to learn yesterday that 90 Army cadets have been dismissed for cheating on examinations. Never in West Point history have so many cadets been involved in similar charges. Feeling no sympathy for the guilty men, another cadet told reporters that the action strengthens, not weakens, the honor code at The Point.



9. (M.A.) **September 1951: Giants win the National League pennant on Thompson’s shot** The New York Giants have won the National League pennant in a most dramatic fashion as 27-year-old Bobby Thompson, called “the Scot,” hit a Ralph Branca fast ball into the stands at the Polo Grounds to give the Giants a come-from-behind 5-4 victory over arch-rival Brooklyn Dodgers in the third and last playoff game. The Giants, who were 13-1/2 games out of first place in mid-August, tied the Dodgers on the season’s last day. Their playoff victory allows the Giants to meet the American League pennant winner, the Yankees, in the 1951 World Series this week.

10. (A.G.) **December 1951: Hoppy is biggest idol of early fifties** Hopalong Cassidy on his horse Topper will ride into TV sunsets week after week for years to come if American youngsters have anything to say about their newest hero. Having made about 65 original small-budget westerns before 1947, actor William Boyd bought the TV rights. Once on the tube, the reaction was electric and a bonanza for Boyd. Instantly, Hoppy was a Sunday evening hero. “Every kid needs a hero,” said producer Cecil B. DeMille. “Hopalong Cassidy takes the place of Buffalo Bill, Babe Ruth, Lindbergh, and all the rest.” The sales of Hoppy’s films, lunch pails, hats, gun and holster sets, T-shirts, spurs, towels, rugs, candy bars, tumblers, wallpaper, and comics plus personal appearances have elevated Boyd’s income into the stratosphere.

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11. (A.G.) **Spring 1952: Panty raids hit college campuses** American college students have done some zany things (e.g., goldfish swallowing), but this spring a young man's fancy turned to coed underwear—namely panties. At the University of Missouri recently, 2,000 men went on a rampage through the women's dormitories. The next day the "thieves" deposited all the bras, slips, and panties on the gym floor and earmarked them for return to the coeds. Soon, males at other universities were imitating their peers in Missouri. At the University of Toledo, 35 girls rushed through men's dorms in quest of men's shorts. Insanity or stunt, it can only happen on American college campuses!

12. (A.G.) **July 1952: America sees green—in everything** Americans, wherever they go this year, are seeing green—toothpaste (11 separate brands), shampoo, stick deodorants, chewing gum, dog food, soap, and cigarettes. In a word, we are bathing in green! The green is really a miracle ingredient—chlorophyll—put into myriad of products to freshen or flavor them. Hebrew National Meats has even been working on a chlorophyll-treated salami, (the "wurst" was yet to come). Some scientists believe chloresium, the trade name for chlorophyll, has medicinal properties to heal ulcers and treat viruses and bacteria. Lever Brothers, the makers of a chlorophyll toothpaste, isn't listening to critics, and to this point their gamble has paid off handsomely.



13. (M.A.) **September 24, 1952: Marciano becomes new heavyweight champ** Last night in Philadelphia, the heavyweight boxing crown changed hands when durable and tough Rocky Marciano knocked out defending champion Jersey Joe Walcott in the 13th round. Marciano, a most likable man, possesses one of the hardest punches in the history of the sport.

14. (D.B.) **December 1951: Colorado housewife claims she was 19th-century Irishwoman** According to Ruth Simmons, a Colorado housewife, she has uncommon powers. Recently put into a trance by an amateur hypnotist, Morey Bernstein, Mrs. Simmons leaped up, danced an Irish jig, and spoke in a thick Irish brogue. She believes she is the reincarnation of Bridey Murphy, a 19th-century woman from Cork and Belfast! Truth or fraud, Mrs. Simmons has generated a fad of reincarnation jokes, nightclub acts, and even a flaming reincarnation cocktail.

15. (D.B.) **November 1952: First 3-D movie does boffo at box office** *Bwana Devil*, Hollywood's first attempt to create three-dimensional reality, opened in Los Angeles this week to mixed reviews. Grossing \$95,000 in the first week, *Bwana Devil* was filmed in a process to give optical illusions to the audience who have to use special glasses in order to see the 3-D picture. The star, Robert Stack, and the viewers pretend to be ducking jungle spears, evading lions, and blinking at fist fights. The novelty of the film has lured a large audience up to now, but one wonders what's around the corner to keep people coming to the movies. Maybe "Smell-o-Vision."

16. (A.G.) **Spring 1953: *I Love Lucy* tops TV polls** *I Love Lucy*, the continuing saga of an urban housewife who gets into the most zany and bizarre comedy situations, is now the number one TV show in the country. The show stars

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Lucille Ball and real-life husband Desi Arnez as the Ricardos and features William Frawley and Vivian Vance as the Mertzes, an older couple who live downstairs but who inevitably get mixed up with Lucy's hilarious routines. The show has universal appeal, and its huge audience every week give Miss Ball status as TV's top comedienne. In fact, more people watched *I Love Lucy* in one episode than watched the inauguration of Dwight Eisenhower as president on January 20, 1953.

17. (A.G.) **April 1953: Scrabble—the game of the 1950s—sets sales records** Scrabble, a game to improve your vocabulary and serve as an alternative to couples who don't like to play cards, has caught on with the American public much the same way as the ever-popular parlor game Monopoly did in the late 1930s. Inventor Alfred Butts wanted a game "with a balance between all skills, like chess, and no skill, like dice." At latest count more than 50,000 games have been sold.



18. (E.R.M.) **June 1, 1953: Mt. Everest scaled by hearty British team** The last great unscaled mountain in the world has finally been conquered. Mt. Everest, so often wooed but never won, has been climbed by a British team headed by Edmund Hillary of New Zealand and Tenzing Norkey of Nepal, the nation wherein most of the 29,002-foot peak lies. Hillary and Tenzing, having insured their place in the history of exploration, immediately cabled Queen Elizabeth, who, as she readied for her official coronation this week, was extremely pleased and accepted the feat as a coronation gift.

19. (D.B.) **June 20, 1953: Rosenbergs executed as atom spies after Supreme Court vacates stays of execution** Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, convicted two years ago for their part as spies in the atomic bomb theft during World War II, were electrocuted last night at Sing Sing Prison. The New York couple, who had pleaded innocent after their arrest in the summer of 1950, had a tension-filled two years before last night. Several stays of execution and appeals had kept their hopes up until a final stay was vacated and Ethel Rosenberg's personal plea to President Eisenhower was rejected. A crowd of more than 5,000 gathered in Union Square to denounce Eisenhower.

20. (A.G.) **Fall 1953: New men's magazine features Monroe in the altogether** *Playboy*, a new magazine billed as "entertainment for men," is off the presses and into stores. *Playboy's* publisher-editor, Hugh Hefner, has saturated his monthly work with his own pleasure-seeking philosophy, a Playmate of the Month, and decidedly off-color cartoons. In addition, Hefner has plans to include America's top writers within its covers. For the time being, readers will have to settle for a very special nude picture of America's new sex symbol, film starlet Marilyn Monroe, as *Playboy's* first playmate.

21. (M.A.) **May 7, 1954: British runner breaks four-minute mile** Roger Bannister, a 24-year-old medical student, has just run history's first recorded under four-minute mile, a feat thought impossible by many track and field experts. Yesterday, on Iffley Road track in Oxford, England, the tall, lanky Bannister ran a three-minute 5-.4 second mile in a meet between Oxford University and the Achilles Athletic Association.

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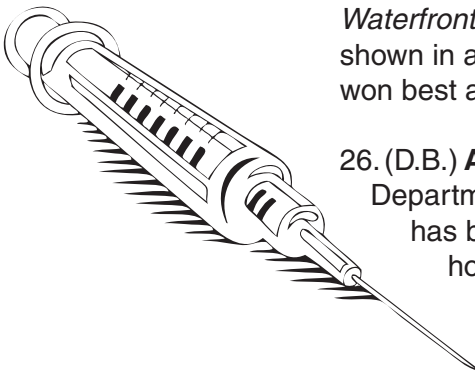
22. (D.B.) **June 1954: Security clearance denies to nuclear scientist** Famous nuclear scientist Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer, one of the brilliant men responsible for developing the A-bomb, has been found to be a security risk. His clearance to work further on V.S. projects has not been renewed. The Atomic Energy Commission in Washington, D.C., found no hard evidence that Oppenheimer is a communist or guilty of disloyalty, but the commission did find that he had friends who were communists and that he lacked “enthusiasm” while working on the hydrogen bomb projects for the government. The decision has been both praised and criticized.

23. (E.R.M.) **November 1954: Hemingway wins Nobel Prize for Literature** America’s foremost writer of simple, lucid prose, Ernest Hemingway, has just won the coveted Nobel Prize for Literature. The Swedish Academy will present his award next month in Stockholm. In winning the award, Hemingway becomes the fifth American to win the prize. His predecessors are Sinclair Lewis (1930), Eugene O’Neill (1936), Pearl Buck (1938), and William Faulkner (1949). Hemingway’s award was given for his superb novels and short stories about man facing challenging situations (e.g., *The old Man and the Sea*, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, and *A Farewell to Arms*).

24. (A.G.) **April 1955: Davy Crockett rage sweeps country** Television has its way of creating instant heroes and cults. Its newest is frontier legend Davy Crockett, showcased last December on Walt Disney’s Disneyland, the popular Sunday night family series. The TV hero, played by lanky and folksy Fess Parker, has generated a large market for Crockett products. Latest estimates indicate this \$100-million market includes T-shirts, coonskin caps, lunch pails, pup tents, and a record entitled *The Ballad of Davy Crockett*. Not everyone is overjoyed. One harried department store buyer said, “The next person who mentions Davy Crockett to me gets a Davy Crockett flintlock over his head.”

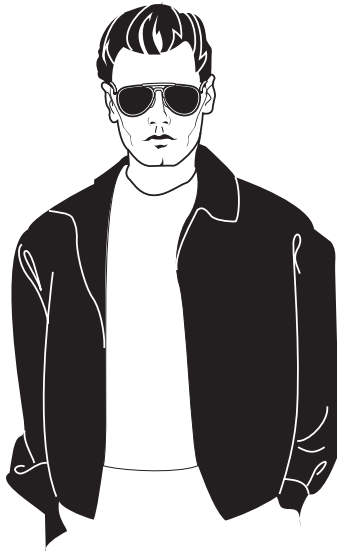
25. (A.G.) **April 1955: *On the Waterfront* is top Oscar winner** Beating out such outstanding films as *The Caine Mutiny*, *The Country Girl*, *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*, and *Three Coins in a Fountain*, the dramatic, gut-wrenching *On the Waterfront* garnered eight Academy awards, including best picture of 1954. Marlon Brando won the prized best actor award and Eva Marie Saint won best supporting actress, while Elia Kazan won for best director. *On the Waterfront* is the story of politics and labor problems among dock workers, shown in a realism and brutality rarely depicted on the screen. Grace Kelly won best actress for her sterling performance in *The Country Girl*.

26. (D.B.) **April 1955: Polio shots okayed by U.S. government** U.S. Health Department officials have just told Dr. Jonas Salk that his polio vaccine has been proven safe and effective. Soon Americans everywhere will hold out their arms for mass inoculations. In 1952, 58,000 persons were hospitalized with polio. These numbers should drastically decline. Recently, Salk received the Congressional Medal of Honor for “great achievement in the field of medicine.” An American original, Salk has turned down all cash awards and says simply that he wants to get back to his lab to do more research.



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27. (A.G.) **Spring 1955: Think pink—everything and everywhere** Certainly the fashion-grabber of the year is the trend to shocking pink. Men by the millions are buying, going to buy, or receiving pink shirts, ties, robes, and hat bands. Most men have briefly forsaken traditional white shirts, and now wear pink under their gray flannel or dark charcoal suits. The office may never be the same again! In fact, one designer forecasts purple, green, and mint-green shirts on the fashion horizon.



28. (D.B.) **July 1953: Millions flock to Disneyland after park opens this month** Anaheim, California, once a sleepy town founded by German immigrants, will no doubt attain world fame. Walt Disney, Hollywood's famed children's filmmaker, is right on target with his future plans. Disney's amusement park, Disneyland, opened this month to thousands of families who traveled to Southern California to see what miracles Disney has performed. Reports indicate that sections of the park, Frontierland, Adventureland, and Fantasyland, are pure entertainment for young and old alike.

29. (D.B.) **October 1, 1955: Screen idol James Dean died in car crash** James Dean, the brooding film actor whose personality and lifestyle has captured the hearts of America's teenagers, was killed yesterday when his Porsche crashed into another car near Salinas, California. Dean died instantly. The young actor leaves a legacy of three memorable films: *Giant* (he had just completed it), *Rebel Without a Cause*, and *East of Eden*. In addition, he leaves a legacy of his personal magnetism and individualism, admired so much by American teenagers who seem to be the opposite of Dean's nonconformity.

30. (M.A.) **November 30, 1953: Patterson beats Moore for heavyweight boxing crown** Twenty-one year old Floyd Patterson has just become the youngest world heavyweight boxing champion in the history of the sport. In a fight against challenger Archie Moore for Rocky Marciano's vacated boxing crown, Patterson, an Olympic medal winner in the 1952 Helsinki games, easily outboxed Moore and won the coveted crown.

31. (D.B.) **February 1956: Civil rights strife in Alabama continues** The Negro boycott of the segregated city buses in Montgomery, Alabama, continues to grab headlines across the nation. Many Negro ministers, including the youthful Martin Luther King Jr., 27, are determined to end the injustice that exists in the South, especially in Alabama and Georgia. The bus boycott started two months ago on December 1, 1955, when Mrs. Rosa Parks was ordered by a City Bus Lines bus driver to get up and make way for some white passengers. Tired and hurt, Mrs. Parks refused and was arrested and fined \$10. Leaflets calling for a boycott of bus service were disseminated throughout the Negro sections of Montgomery. After 12 weeks the boycott has stung the city's economy. This Negro civil rights action could be the start of something historic.

32. (A.G.) **February 1956: Ed Sullivan Show is top TV program** The latest Trendex rating shows the ever-durable Sunday night *Ed Sullivan Show* to be the most watched TV program in the nation. Following in popularity are *The \$64,000 Question*, *I Love Lucy*, *December Bride*, *Talent Scouts*, *You Bet Your Life*, *The Red Skelton Show*, *What's My Line?*, and *Disneyland*.

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33. (D.B.) **March 1956: *My Fair Lady* big Broadway smash** An absolutely captivating musical from those fertile minds of Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Loewe has hit Broadway and perhaps will become part of theater history. The musical play, *My Fair Lady*, is an adaptation of George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*. The hit show recently opened at the Mark Hellinger Theatre to praise from Broadway's toughest critics. Part of the praise goes to the music and part to Shaw's original idea. Much of its success, however, belongs to the play's stars—Rex Harrison, as the persistent Professor Henry Higgins, and 20-year-old Julie Andrews, a charmer from London's Music Hall circuit, who, as Eliza Doolittle, is a cockney taught to speak like an elegant, highbred English lady. The pair are thrilling to watch. Songs like *The Rain in Spain*, *On the Street Where You Live*, and *Wouldn't It Be Lovely* are memorable, indeed. They will be hummed and whistled for years to come.

34. (E.R.M.) **April 1958: Actress Grace Kelly becomes princess of Monaco after marriage vows** Perhaps the wedding of the decade took place in the principality of Monaco this week when Hollywood actress Grace Kelly married Prince Ranier III of Monaco in a ceremony preceded and followed by rockets, sirens, and 21-gun salutes. The citizens of this small nation on the French Riviera have gone mad with excitement. According to *Time* magazine, wedding gifts have been pouring in, "karat upon karat."

We will  
bury you.  
—Khrushchev

35. (E.R.M.) **November 1956: Khrushchev's message to western democracies—"We will bury you"** Nikita Khrushchev, Russia's powerful premier, has made a stunning statement to the world. At a reception for visiting Polish diplomats, the Soviet leader announced to capitalistic nations, "It doesn't depend on you whether or not we exist. If you don't like us, don't accept our invitations and don't invite us to come to see you; whether you like it or not, history is on our side. We will bury you." This indeed is a chilling reminder of our division and the Cold War.

36. (A.G.) **September 1, 1956: Elvis Presley censored on Sullivan's TV show** Elvis "the Pelvis" Presley, the 23-year-old Rock 'n Roll idol to millions of teenagers, appeared on TV's top variety show last night, but viewers caught only half of his act. In an agreement before his appearance, Presley's agent and CBS officials negotiated a contract for an unheard of \$50,000 for three shows. Because of Presley's gyrating and swiveling hips, CBS cameramen were told to black out the singer from the waist down. Despite the censorship, Presley sang his hits *Heartbreak Hotel*, *Don't Be Cruel*, *Love Me Tender*, and *Hound Dog*. He bought screams and sighs from the mostly female audience. The show, hosted by Charles Laughton, garnered 82.6% of the nation's TV audience.

37. (D.B.) **Fall 1956: *Peyton Place*, sex novel of the decade, heads best seller list** Called by some the most lurid book since the works of Henry Miller, Grace Metalious' sensational new and titillating novel, *Peyton Place*, lifts the lid on the intimate lives of people in a small New England town. Each character in the novel has a lurid past, and each page is saturated with subjects hot enough to push Miss Metalious' first novel to the top of the best seller list. One unhappy repercussion for the author: her husband, a principal of a school in New England, has lost his job as a result of the controversy over the novel's setting and characters.



38. (E.R.M.) **October 5, 1957: United States stunned as Russians fire satellite into space** The Soviet Union has taken an enormous leap ahead in the space race today when it launched a man-made earth satellite into space. Tass, the official Soviet News Agency, announced the launching this morning. Sputnik, the 184-pound artificial moon, is circling the globe once every hour and 35 minutes. The orbiting arc is 560 miles above the earth. American observers, concerned and even alarmed by the Soviet feat, already are criticizing the U.S.'s lack of engineering and emphasis on science in American schools and universities, which apparently allowed the Russians to show their superiority in the Sputnik launching.

39. (D.B.) **Fall 1957: French film introduces Brigitte Bardot** A new film star is in our midst and she is magnifique! Her name is Brigitte Bardot, and her first popular film in the U.S. is *And God Created Woman*. Americans are lining up outside movie theaters all across the country anxious to see B.B., the French "sex kitten," display her acting talents and charms. Some Americans, however, will have to wait because Philadelphia, Fort Worth, and other cities have banned the film. In spite of local censorship, B.B.'s attraction has turned the film into a million dollar grosser. "Vive, le B.B.!"

40. (D.B.) **April 1958: Elvis drafted** Elvis Presley is in the army now! Presley, the singing idol of millions, was recently given his Army physical and inducted into Uncle Sam's Army. After his intelligence test (average) and physical (good health), Elvis, as U.S. 53310761, reported for boot camp at Fort Hood, Texas, where as one of 10,000 young men he will be trained to defend our nation in times of war. Asking for no special consideration for his star-status in films, TV, and records, Elvis said, "Millions of other guys have been drafted and I don't want to be different in the Army from anyone else." The rock idol will be in the Second Armored Division as a regular GI and, as it appears now, will be sent to Germany during his tour of duty.

41. (A.G.) **April 1958: Oscars honor *The Bridge on the River Kwai*** In one of the best years for movies and moviegoers, the exciting, suspenseful *The Bridge on the River Kwai* won the lion's share of Academy Awards this week. Besides best picture of 1957, directed by David Lean, the film won six other Oscars, including best director, best screenplay, and best actor. The best actor award was won by Britain's Alec Guinness for his portrayal of a stiff but tough colonel who builds a bridge over the River Kwai for the Japanese. William Holden also headed the outstanding international cast. Best actress honors went to Joanne Woodward for her performance as the confused woman in *The Three Faces of Eve*. As best picture Kwai won over such stalwart films as *Witness for the Prosecution*, *Sayonara*, *Twelve Angry Men*, and the highly publicized *Peyton Place*.

42. (D.B.) **August 5, 1958: Atomic sub *Nautilus* crosses underneath North Pole** The United States' atomic-powered submarine, *Nautilus*, named for the underwater craft in Jules Verne's fictional *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*, written a century ago, has made the first undersea crossing of the North Pole. Under the leadership of Commander William Robert Anderson, 37, the *Nautilus* submerged near Point Barrow, Alaska, four days ago and sailed under the 50-foot-thick ice cap for 96 hours before surfacing between Spitsbergen and Greenland.

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43. (A.G.) **Fall 1958: Hula Hoop craze circles nation** Always ready to latch onto the latest fad or craze, young and old alike are swiveling their hips with plastic circles called hula hoops. Made first by Wham-O, a California company, the plastic hoops were created by geniuses Spud Melin and Richard Knerr, who had heard about gym classes in Australia having fun by exercising with bamboo hoops. Soon Wham-O began producing thousands at a cost of \$1.95. The hoop explosion is history. In Boston recently, a 10-year-old boy whirled his hoop for four straight hours (18,200 turns) to set a record, which at this point seems unbeatable.



44. (D.B.) **January 3, 1959: President Eisenhower proclaims Alaska 49th state** Today at 12:02 p.m. (EST), President Dwight Eisenhower signed an execution order giving Alaska statehood, thereby adding a 49th star to the U.S. flag. Alaska, purchased in 1867 upon a recommendation by Secretary of State William Seward, was thought to be a “folly.” In the last 90 years, however, critics have been silenced because of Alaska’s national resources and strategic location in the Arctic Circle near the Soviet Union.

45. (E.R.M.) **January 1959: Military coup brings Castro to power in Cuba** After three years of revolutionary work to gain power in Cuba, Fidel Castro, 32-year-old lawyer and Cuban patriot, has taken over the government in his country and driven the former dictator, Fulgencio Batista, into exile. Castro, bearded and wearing a military uniform, promised a democratic regime as his forces entered Cuba’s capital, Havana. Castro was aided in his quest by Major Ernesto “Che” Guevara, an inspired and dedicated revolutionary soldier. Kangaroo court proceedings preceded many executions of Batista’s henchmen. Castro will officially take over the Cuban government in February.

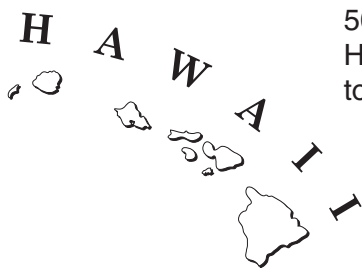
46. (D.B.) **February 4, 1959: Rock singers die in plane crash** Three of rockdom’s top artists—Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens, and J.P. “The Big Bopper” Richardson—were found dead today near the wreckage of their plane bound for Fargo, North Dakota. The trio, currently big attractions wherever they appeared in concerts, were en route from Clear Lake, Iowa, to North Dakota where their aircraft, no doubt hampered by icy winds and poor visibility, crashed and snuffed out the lives of the three greats of American Rock ‘n Roll music. Valens’ *Donna*, Big Bopper’s *Chantilly Lace*, and Holly’s *Peggy Sue* will live on in the hearts of their bereaved fans.

47. (A.G.) **May 1959: College frat crams 40 men in VW bug** Men of Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity at Long Beach (California) State College have broken—at this time—the record for cramming the most people into a Volkswagen bug—40 uncomfortable bodies! This latest college stunt has become very competitive, especially in California, where it seems most zany stunts originate. Other popular rites during this spring are “cramming” students into a telephone booth (current record 22) and “stuffing” a dormitory room with crumpled newspapers. Is there any hope for this generation, many ask?

48. (A.G.) **Spring 1959: Sergeant Bilko’s Platoon walks off with 1958 Emmy awards** Certainly one of the most outrageous TV situation comedies since *I Love Lucy*, *The Phil Silvers Show* stars Phil Silvers as a fast-talking opportunist named Sergeant Bilko. Silvers shares the show’s honors with an outstanding supporting cast who make up his platoon and commanding

officers. Bilko's antics for this man's peacetime army include raffles, card parties, and all sorts of get-rich schemes cleverly hidden from the naive Colonel Hall played by Paul Ford.

49. (A.G.) **May 1959: Liz and Eddie finally headed for the altar** In one of the biggest stories of the year, the romance between film actress Elizabeth Taylor (*Giant*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*) and pop singer Eddie Fisher (*I'm Walking Behind You*, *Count Your Blessings*) appears ready for the final chapter—matrimony. Married before age 30 to Nicky Hilton, Michael Wilding, and the late Mike Todd, Taylor has managed to catch Fisher rebounding from a four-year stormy marriage to winsome and pert actress Debbie Reynolds. The Liz-Eddie-Debbie triangle, grabbing headlines since March 1958, remains, to one columnist of tinsel town, "Hollywood's most shameful story."



50. (D.B.) **August 21, 1959: Hawaii becomes 50th star on U.S. flag** The Hawaiian Islands, long known for exotic scenery and friendly people, have today become the 50th state of the Union. President Dwight Eisenhower, who only seven months ago issued an executive proclamation for Alaskan statehood, issued an order for a new flag of 50 stars arranged in staggered rows. The flag is to become official on July 4, 1960. Hawaii, an American annexation since 1898, becomes the first overseas state. It is already known as the Aloha State. Aloha means hello and goodbye. Principal industries, besides tourism, include sugar and pineapple production. Honolulu, on the island of Oahu, is the state capital.

51. (D.B.) **November 1959: Cranberry scare changes holiday menus** Housewives planning their usual Thanksgiving dinner will have to make some changes, according to an official government report. A.S. Fleming, Health, Education, and Welfare secretary, warned housewives against buying cranberries, a Thanksgiving staple, because during the 1958-1959 growing season in Oregon and Washington, a weed killer, which has caused cancer in rats, has contaminated the usually safe fruit.

52. (D.B.) **November 1959: Quiz fizz exposed by contestant Van Doren** Before a congressional subcommittee hearing this week, quiz show contestant Charles Van Doren broke down and admitted that he had been given answers to questions he would get on the popular TV show *Twenty-One*. Van Doren, a young, handsome English instructor at New York's Columbia University, was the symbol of intellectual arrogance when he pretended to grope for difficult answers on the subjects of baseball and opera as he climbed the ladder toward \$129,000 in prize money, to say nothing of millions of viewers who bit off countless fingernails hoping Van Doren would come up with the answer he had already been supplied before the show. But Van Doren, as he exposed the workings of other TV quiz shows like *The \$64,000 Question*, *Dotto*, *The \$100,000 Big Surprise*, was a different man sitting and talking to congressmen. Said Van Doren, "I would give almost anything I have to reverse the course of my life in the last three years." In a scathing editorial, the media's weekly magazine, *TV Guide*, condemned the whole affair, saying, "We refuse to accept the sorry excuse that the actions of the quiz show producers are merely symbolic of our nation's preoccupation with material wealth. Honesty and truth are still respected above easy money in America." As the decade comes to a close, TV is left with a black eye.

# SENATOR JOSEPH McCARTHY - 1

**Directions:** In this segment of Phase 1: The Big Events, you analyze documents concerning Senator Joseph McCarthy, if not the most popular personality of the 1950s, certainly the most controversial figure. Work individually or in pairs. If you choose to work in pairs, please put both names on the paper you submit at the end. Note: You may differ in your interpretations of the documents below. Read all of the following documents carefully. Then follow the instructions below.

## Headlines



- McCarthy Blasts State Department
- McCarthy Charges 57 in State Department Hold Red Party Cards
- McCarthy Accuses Three State Aides As Pinkos
- Truman orders own Red Probe
- McCarthy Avoids Spy Charge in Talk outside Congress
- State Dept. Shocked By McCarthy's Attack
- Check Shows No Known Reds in State Department
- Lattimore Blasts McCarthy For Lies
- McCarthy Waters Charges, Dares Trio to Sue For Libel
- McCarthy Strikes At Allen Dulles
- McCarthy, Dirksen Suggest Labor Camps For Army Reds
- Stevens Swears McCarthy Falsified, Lays "Perversion of Power" to Him
- McCarthy Accepts Cohn Resignation
- Five Charges Listed Against McCarthy
- Army-McCarthy Verdicts Put Blame on Both Sides

## General comments

- "Isn't it a fact ... that the Senator from Wisconsin is simply asking for an investigation to determine whether there were disloyal persons in the State Department?"—Sen. Kenneth Wherry, 1950
- "...a loudmouthed Joe McCarthy was making a wretched burlesque of the serious and necessary business of loyalty checking ... damaging no reputations permanently except his own."—*Time*, March 1950
- "McCarthyism is guilt by association."—Frequent accusation in the early 1950s
- "Whether we like it or not, the Wisconsin senator has become an influential factor in American life."—*Christian Century*, December 1950
- "I don't care if Joe doesn't uncover a single Commie in the State Department. He'll scare the rats out."—Radio interview, 1952
- [McCarthy is] ... a vigorous figure who won't be pushed around. [He has done] ... a valuable job ..."—J. Edgar Hoover, 1953
- "The American people are sick and tired of being afraid to speak their minds lest they be politically smeared as Communists or Fascists by their opponents. Freedom of speech is not what it used to be in America ... The American people are sick and tired of seeing innocent people smeared and guilty people whitewashed ..."—Sen. Margaret Chase Smith, June 1950

## SENATOR JOSEPH McCARTHY - 2

“  
... the most  
dangerous  
menace  
to America ...

”

- “We must get rid of McCarthyism in our public life.”—President Truman, Nov. 1952.
- “... the assertion that there is a ‘reign of terror’ directed at all who disagree with Senator McCarthy ... is irresponsible nonsense.”—William Buckley Jr., 1954
- “One of McCarthy’s great and simple virtues was that he was true to today’s truisms. He had no ‘open mind’ toward communism. He was positive that it was evil.” —Godfrey Schmidt, Sept. 1957
- [McCarthy is] ... “the most dangerous menace to America; when I think of him, I think of Hitler.”—Arthur Eisenhower, brother of the president, July 1952
- [McCarthy is] ... “the most formidable figure to hit the Senate since Huey Long ... He is ... bold and daring and elusive and slippery ...”—*The New Republic*, April 1950
- “After nearly two years of tramping the nation shouting he was ‘rooting out skunks,’ just how many Communists has Joe rooted out? The answer is none ...”—*Time*, Sept. 1951
- “Senator McCarthy was a patriotic American and a determined opponent of Communists ... The President singled him out for studied insults. No man in public life was ever persecuted or maligned because of his beliefs as was Senator McCarthy.”—Editorial in *The Chicago Tribune*
- “... I believe that even after all the excesses and mistakes are counted up, Senator McCarthy used the best methods available to him to fight a battle that needed to be fought ... He may have been wrong in details, but he was right in essentials. Certainly few can deny that the government of the United States had in it enough Communist sympathizers and Soviet advisors to twist ... American foreign policy for close to two decades .... What is indisputable is that he was a courageous man who fought a monumental evil.”—Roy Cohn (McCarthy aide), 1968

### Senator McCarthy’s words

“  
McCarthyism  
is  
Americanism.

”

- “In my opinion, the State Department ... is thoroughly infested with Communists. I have in my hand [205...57...81...] cases of individuals who would appear to be either card-carrying or certainly loyal to the Communist Party, but who nevertheless are still helping to shape our foreign policy.”—Feb. 9, 1950
- “I sent him, President Truman, a telegram and said, ‘Mr. President, I have the 57 names; they are yours if you want them,’ and when he answered by calling me a liar, I felt I could get no cooperation from the president ... I thought the only thing left to do was to let the people of this country know what is going on and ... force the President to clean house ... I intend to give all the facts.”—Feb. 20, 1950
- “I am going to prove everything I said, right down the line.”—March, 1950
- “McCarthyism is Americanism.”—Frequent reply by McCarthy
- “The average American can do very little insofar as digging Communists, espionage agents, out of our government is concerned. They

## SENATOR JOSEPH McCARTHY - 3

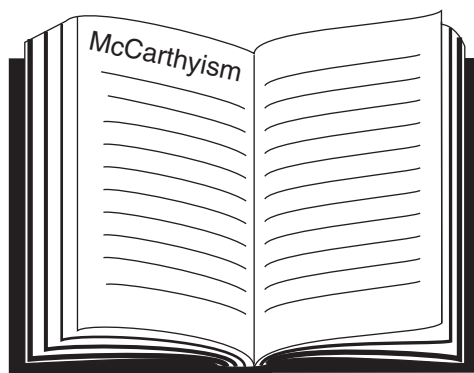
must depend upon those of us whom they send down here to man the watchtowers of the nation.”—A 1954 statement by McCarthy

- “The job of cleaning out the skunks will go on, a dirty, foul, unpleasant, smelly job, but it has to be done, and it will be done—in spite of the high-pitched squealing of those left-wing bleeding hearts of the press and radio.”—From a 1951 McCarthy speech
- “Strangely enough, those in the State Dept. who scream the loudest about what they call guilt by association are the first to endorse innocence by association.”—From a book by McCarthy, 1952

### Instructions

Now that you’ve read the documents about or by Senator McCarthy, reflect for a moment or two and then comment on the following:

1. What was McCarthy’s goal as he saw it and as his critics saw it?
2. What were his methods as he saw them and as his critics saw them?
3. In your opinion, were McCarthy’s methods justifiable in light of the communist menace he saw? Explain.
  4. Could a McCarthy be successful on today’s political scene? Is there a need to purge (get rid of, purify) radical beliefs or ideologies?
  5. In your own words, write out a definition of “McCarthyism.” (Then look it up in most dictionaries. See how close yours is to prevailing opinion.)
  6. Pick one (or more) of the following statements which comes closest to your judgment of Senator McCarthy. Write why you agree with it.
    - McCarthy was just like most politicians. He found a “hot” issue—in this case, communism—and used it to further his own political career.
    - McCarthy’s legacy was positive. He was unfairly chewed up in the liberal press of his time while he did a great service to his country and to the American people.
    - Senator McCarthy was, to put it bluntly, a demagogue in the mold of a Huey Long or Hitler. He used doctored photos, faked letters, and walked all over the civil liberties guaranteed by our Constitution to alert Americans to an imaginary menace. Americans paid the price by having its citizens turned into a generation of silent conformists afraid to speak their minds.
    - Even in the America of today, the fruits of Senator McCarthy’s labors go unrewarded. He alerted us to a real and cancerous enemy.



# ANALYZING THE FIFTIES

**Directions:** Use the generalizations and facts on this page to help you answer the questions found on the ANALYZING THE FIFTIES WORKSHEET.

1. Most Americans were generally prosperous and happy with their lifestyles.
2. There was a considerable movement of families to the suburbs several miles outside large cities.
3. Housing tracts such as Levittown sprang up everywhere, and personal home ownership increased.
4. Americans spent billions of dollars on leisure-time activities.
5. Education was held in fairly high esteem. High school and college graduates increased in number.
6. The automobile industry grew into huge corporations and traffic increased tremendously.
7. People desired and bought new convenience gadgets to use around their homes and businesses.
8. Food production in the U.S. reached new heights with farms producing 230 billion pounds of meat, 11 billion bushels of wheat, and 31 billion bushels of corn.
9. American homes for the first time were heated by gas or oil, rather than by coal.
10. In 1950, 3.1 million American homes had TV sets; by 1955, 32 million families had TVs.
11. Population in America grew from approximately 150 million in 1950 to 180 million in 1959.
12. The gross national production (the total of all goods and services in the American economy) grew from \$290 billion in 1950 to \$480 billion in 1959.
13. The U.S. defense budget rose shockingly from \$12 million in 1950 to \$47 million in 1959.
14. The annual salary per person in the U.S. grew from \$3,200 a year in 1950 to \$5,400 in 1959.
15. Money spent for advertising grew from \$5 million in 1950 to \$11 million in 1959.
16. The number of farms in America declined from 5,500 in 1950 to 3,500 in 1959.
17. America's suburban population in 1953 had grown to 30 million people—or 10,400,000 families.
18. The production of the great American hot dog" increased from 750 million pounds in 1950 to 1,050,000,000 pounds in 1960; potato chip production increased from 320 million pounds in 1950 to 532 million pounds in 1960.
19. Little League baseball participants increased from 776 in 1950 to 5,700 in 1960.
20. Encyclopedia sales increased from \$72 million in 1950 to \$1,300 million in 1960.
21. Aspirin sales increased from 12 million pounds in 1950 to 18 million pounds in 1960.
22. Vodka production increased from 100,000 gallons in 1950 to nine million gallons in 1960.
23. National forest campers increased from 1.5 million people in 1950 to 6.6 million in 1960.
24. The bestselling book (nonfiction) in the years 1952, 1953, and 1954 was the Holy Bible, which averaged over 1.3 million copies in each of the three years.
25. New magazines of the 1950s included *TV Guide* (the biggest seller), *Playboy*, *Sports Illustrated*, and *Mad*.
26. Americans reported an average of 600 sightings a year of "flying saucers."
27. Americans increased their aid to foreign countries from \$4.5 million in 1950 to \$5.5 million in 1959.
28. Millions of miles of freeway, turnpikes, and highways, usually funded by the federal government, were constructed in the U.S. in the fifties.

# ANALYZING THE FIFTIES WORKSHEET

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Using the ANALYZING THE FIFTIES handout, write answers to #1-#5. Then write two or more hypotheses under #6.

1. What pictures of Americans and American life in the 1950s emerge from these statistics and facts?
  
2. What can these same statistics tell you about values held by Americans in the 1950s?
  
3. Some observers have called Americans of the fifties an “affluent society.” What numbered items on the ANALYZING THE FIFTIES handout support this statement?
  
4. What statistics are perhaps missing from the listing in #3 that might give a more accurate and more honest picture of America during the 1950s (or any decade under study)?
  
5. As you examine the statistics in the ANALYZING THE FIFTIES handout what do you find pleasant or unpleasant about life in the 1950s ? Explain.
  
6. Write two or more hypotheses about life in the 1950s. (**Remember:** a hypothesis is an assumption a person makes based on what he/she knows/thinks about something. The statement is conjecture and is always a subject for further investigation.) Under your hypotheses place the numbers of the items on the ANALYZING THE FIFTIES handout that support your assumption.

# ADS AND COMMERCIALS - 1

**Introduction** If the 1920s saw the zenith of the advertising business and the Madison Avenue ad man, then the 1950s finished a close second. Throughout these years, Americans were barraged with thousands of new products and new techniques to sell them. The 1950s were, in fact, the years of the gray flannel suit and the big sell. Using TV, radio, and slick, widely circulated magazines and newspapers, advertisers created needs in people they never knew they had. Whether it was green toothpaste, TV dinners, pink dress shirts, Edsels, or the newest men's shoe craze like Thom McAn's Snap Jacks (more than a million sold in 1956), affluent and less affluent Americans believed what they read and saw and spent millions of dollars on convenience products to make their lives "fuller" and "happier."

“  
... the 1950s  
'were full of  
happy people  
with happy  
problems.'  
”

The *Confessions of an Ad-Man* reveals that advertising doesn't really tell lies, usually. Ad men simply make consumers think they have stated some important truth when, in reality, little or nothing has been said. The most effective ads are hidden—you never know they are massaging your minds. Advertisers know that various emotional needs have to be fulfilled if people are to be happy. A famous critic once said the 1950s “were full of happy people with happy problems.”

Ad men confess that there are seven basic needs which they hide in the commercials you hear and the ads you read. Each ad is carefully designed not to sell toothpaste, deodorant, or beer, but rather to convince people that buying the product will satisfy their deepest needs. A successful ad will show that the product will provide one of the Seven Basic Needs: 1) emotional security, 2) a feeling of importance or value, 3) longer life or immortality, 4) a creative outlet, 5) sexual attraction, 6) a sense of power, 7) a sense of roots. Other ways to sell a product that you might add to this list: endorsement, bandwagon, proof test, faulty logic, comparison studies, equality, and glittering generalities.

**Assignment** To get a realistic view of advertising in the 1950s, to understand the values and needs of Americans who lived then, and to learn something about advertising, you will be asked to write an ad or commercial for at least one of the products discussed in this handout. Writing a commercial for radio or TV or an ad for a magazine is worth up to 25 Brownie Points. If you write a commercial or ad and perform/dramatize it in front of the class, it will be worth up to 50 Brownie Points.

Use the following steps:

1. Work individually or in small groups of two to five.
2. Choose one of the 17 ads on the following pages for writing/performing your ad/commercial. The information given you is only a part of the information you'll need. Build from this information.
3. Be sure you “hide” one or more of the emotional needs in your work.
4. Use your own notebook paper, poster board, cassette tape, etc.
5. Let your teacher know if you're merely writing ads and commercials

## ADS AND COMMERCIALS - 2

or if you're going to perform it, so he/she can plan a day for those who wish to dramatize their work.

6. If you dramatize your work, think about background music, sound effects, etc.
7. Feel free to add more descriptive words or phrases to make your ad/commercial fill two to three minutes.

### GUIDELINES AND QUOTES

**Directions:** You may want to find some other ads by searching through magazines of the 1950s in the library.

- 1** **Movie** *Not as a Stranger*: Stanley Kramer, producer/director; Olivia de Havilland, Robert Mitchum, Frank Sinatra, Gloria Grahame, Broderick Crawford, and Charles Bickford. "Seldom has the screen captured such passion and emotion ... fierce, human hungers that probe, like a doctor's scalpel, deep into the very heart of life itself" ... First as a book ... now as a towering motion picture released through United Artists. Based on the novel by Morton Thompson. Summer 1955.
- 2** **Hair cream** Vaseline Cream Hair Tonic: "My brand from now on." Contains Viratol (wonderworking) assuring natural looking hair. Stays neat all day long. Women say, "It sure perks up a man's good looks. Really gives hair that just-combed look all day long!"
- 3** **Furniture** Lane Cedar Hope Chest: The practical love gift. Christmas gift special, \$49.95. "Your daughter's hope chest today is the cradle of her happiness tomorrow." Tested for aroma tightness; moth protection guarantee.
- 4** **Transportation** Santa Fe Railroad: "Have you seen the Grand Canyon yet?" Travel in luxury and comfort anywhere you want. Delicious food, comfortable surroundings. See the United States from your window without worrying about traffic.
- 5** **Beverage** Beer: American's beverage of moderation—enjoy it. "In this home-loving land of ours, in this America of kindness, of friendship, of good-humored tolerance, perhaps no beverages are made at home on more occasions than good beer and ale. They belong to pleasant living, to good fellowship, to sensible moderation. The right to enjoy beer, this too belongs to our own American heritage of personal freedom. Sponsored by U.S. Brewer's Foundation, chartered in 1862.
- 6** **Communication** Crosley Radios: See the 1951 color-styled ladies model. Sounds as good as they look ... and that's wonderful. Never such smart beauty ... such thrilling performance. Decorator-designed cabinets in striking colors. Hear all your favorite radio programs better over your own Crosley radio. Be a proud owner!

## ADS AND COMMERCIALS - 3

- 7 Transportation** 1951 Mercury: Nothing like it on the road—the 1951 Mercury with Merc-o-matic drive—a new automatic transmission that does all the work while you sit back and relax. No jerking, mushiness, slipping, or stalling, just velvet smooth power that responds automatically to your very wish. Naturally, there's no clutch or gear shift.
- 8 Transportation** 1951 Nash Airflight: Discover the wonderful differences in the world's most modern car. Exceptional gas mileage—more than 25 MPG at average highway speed. A Nash Ambassador recently averaged 25.3 MPG for 700 miles! Airliner reclining seats—at night both sides become twin beds. Choose from 20 different upholstery combinations. Choice of conventional or hydramatic drive. Aerodynamic design amazingly reduces wind noise. Body squeaks and rattles are a thing of the past. Even at zero degrees outside, your Nash Airflight has a weather eye system that refreshes, filters, and thermostatically heats the air, on the principles of the pressurized airliner cabin. There's much of tomorrow in all Nash does today.
- 9 Shoes** Roblee Shoes for Men: A brand new Roblee wing-tip brogue style madeover with full-flare easy fitting last. Handsome brown leather clear through for looks that stay the long life of the shoe. You won't find a better buy. At Roblee's most styles are priced from \$10.95 to \$14.95.
- 10 Toiletries** Barbasol Shave Cream: No brush, no lather, no rub-in, no other way of shaving. No other shaving cream gives you closer, cleaner, longer-lasting shaves. And it is so good for your skin! Try it!
- 11 Communication** RCA Victor '45' Record Player. This record player is all play and no work. World leader in radio. Plays beautifully, easily, thriftily. No annoying distortions. Load a stack of nonbreakable 45 records on the big spindle with one hand. The seven-inch 45 records can play as long as 10-inch or 12-inch records, last longer, and cost up to 25% less. Nearly 50 manufacturers now make 45 records. The RCA Victor 45 record player is priced from \$12.95 to \$59.95 with trade-in.
- 12 Cigarettes** Philip Morris: Now millions know—one king size tops 'em all for taste and comfort. "Your throat can tell—it's Philip Morris." Endorsed by Lucille Ball, starring in *I Love Lucy*, Monday nights on CBS-TV. No matter what brand you're now smoking, there's greater pleasure waiting for you in the new Philip Morris king size. Millions of smokers who tried them are buying them over and over again! Once you try them, you will, too. Because your throat can tell that here, at last, is a cigarette not only good to smoke but good to the smoker and good to you! Try a carton now! Call for Philip Morris.
- 13 Toiletries** Mum Mist Spray Deodorant: New Mum Mist protects even the two in five who perspire freely. Here's deodorant protection you never

## ADS AND COMMERCIALS - 4

thought possible! Mum contains miracle hexachlorophene to prevent odor all day long. No more messy running or dripping! Mum sprays on, stays on. It dries fast, won't run, won't drip, won't damage delicate fabrics, and it's safe for normal skin. It sells for 59¢ at all drug stores.

**14 Toiletries** Veto Deodorant: One touch of Veto dries away perspiration worries!" When a memory is in the making, don't let anything come between you. Double check your charm every day with Veto—the deodorant that drives away odor. Remember, if you're nice to be next to, next to nothing is impossible! Available in cream, spray, stick, and aerosol mist.

**15 Beauty product** Toni Home Permanent: A completely new way to wave—even waving Toni! The most even wave ever! No stragglers, no frizz! Simplified—no mess, no guess! Wave right from sponge applicator. Spread smooth-curl width wets every strand. Neutralizer right from the applicator! Sponge comes off and you see and use eight spray tips. You can spray neutralizer inside each curl where hands can't reach. No mess, no miss! Now the spray tips are inside the curl. Press. Neutralizer flows in. All waving action stops. Can't underwave! Can't overwave! Special price now only \$2.29. Reg. \$3.

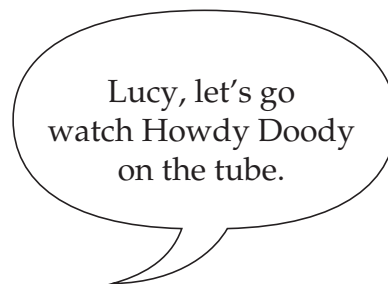
**16 Toiletries** Ennds Chlorophyll Breath Tablets: Stop triple "O." Don't let any odor offense come between you! Stop breath odor! Stop body odor! Stop other personal odors! High potency Ennds tablets are more effective than any other type of chlorophyll product. Acts faster, longer, more thoroughly to stop odor offense all day! You read in *Reader's Digest* how chlorophyll, nature's most effective deodorant, has miraculous power to stop odors of breath and body, both at once! High potency Ennds stops both breath and perspiration odors. These tablets act internally even to check odors of "difficult" days and other odors people don't discuss. They keep you fresh as a daisy ... from head to toe! More than 90% stopped Triple "O" in clinical tests. Trial size—49¢; pocket size—\$1.25; economy size—\$2.75; hospital size—\$12.50.

**17 Transportation** 1958 Edsel: The newest member of the Ford family of fine cars. The 1958 Edsel acts the way it looks, but it doesn't cost that much. The Edsel's 18 elegantly styled models are priced through the range where most people buy. More exciting, more sure, more safe. The Edsel features a classic vertical grille and clean flight deck. Equipped with Teletouch Drive, as easy as pushing a button, the Edsel shifts itself. Powerful V-8 engines—newest in the world. Choice of the E-400 or the E-475 with preset speed indicator which has a red alert light to flash when you exceed your desired speed limit. Priced just above the lowest to just below the highest. See your Edsel dealer today.

# CREATIVE CARTOONING

Dating to before the turn of the 20th century, comic strips have made us laugh and think about life. Perhaps no other comic strip has captured the lifestyle of sophisticated children as well as Peanuts, a humorous strip created in the mid-1950s by Charles M. Schultz. Charlie Brown, Linus, Lucy, Snoopy, and Violet are characters who make us chuckle and see a lighter side of life. To reinforce some of the material already learned, please do the following:

1. Find two to three Peanuts' comic strips in current newspapers.
2. Select and cut out a few. While cutting out, remove all words telling the reader what the characters are saying.
3. In place of the removed words, write in a conversation that might have occurred in a Peanuts strip in the 1950s rather than in this decade.
4. It can be serious or humorous, but be sure to use names, dates, events, facts, etc., which apply to what you have learned about the 1950s to this point.
5. Glue/paste your comic strips on the back of this sheet or on your own paper. Underneath each comic strip make one statement about the essence of the comic strip and what it says about the fifties.



# CONFORMITY SURVEY - 1

**Background** Throughout much of American history we have seen ourselves as strong, self-reliant individualists. The historian Frederick Jackson Turner emphasized this character trait in his description of the 19th-century pioneer, and the image has never died. The actual record, however, often tells another story, especially in the conformity that was a sociological fact in the United States of the 1950s.

When millions of Americans moved out of large cities into suburbia after World War II, new communities sprang to life full of residents who wanted to conform to images and possess items just like their neighbors. This usually meant ticky-tacky tract homes on treeless lots; family station wagon; Sunday afternoon barbecues; currently acceptable clothing and hair styles; Madison Avenue tastes in TV, literature, and movies; and all the other trappings that showed the family was keeping up with the Joneses. This also meant joining the local institutions such as the Girl Scouts, Little League, and PTA. A drab sameness seemed to permeate suburban life.

“

*If you have  
any brains,  
you keep  
them in your  
back pocket  
around here.*

”

Conversations were predictable and bland. Topics like babies, schools, canasta, illnesses, Scrabble, Tupperware parties, and family “togetherness” dominated the thoughts of most middle-class Americans. Critics pointed out the emptiness of these subjects and voiced their concern with the low intellectual level of “babyville,” as they called suburbia. One suburbanite expressed it this way, “If you have any brains, you keep them in your back pocket around here.” It is only speculation whether life in the suburbs spawned this supposed low-brain level, or whether it resulted from the same anti-intellectual climate that twice elected Dwight Eisenhower over the brainy “egghead” Adlai Stevenson. Nevertheless, conformity in thought, deed, and appearance was a fact of life in suburban America during the 1950s.

Madison Avenue, the advertising center of America, certainly helped conformity reach new heights on the national level. Promoting products in magazines, on TV, and over the radio, copywriters served up endless numbers of slogans to affluent, gullible American consumers seeking to fill the emptiness in their lives. A product was “America’s best selling.” (I better get one.) “More Americans own one.” (Why not buy it?) “Nine out of 10 doctors recommend it.” (That’s the one I want!) The result was the great popularity of items such as spiked-heel shoes, pink dress shirts, two-tone Chevrolets or Fords, sack dresses, chlorophyll toothpaste, and paint-by-number sets. If one advertising disaster occurred, it must surely have been the Edsel, a grotesque, chromed chariot from the Ford factories that was utterly rejected by the buying



## CONFORMITY SURVEY - 2

public of the late fifties. Despite such occasional setbacks, clever men and women representing agencies, institutions, and companies came up with new ways to sell people what they didn't know they needed. It was an age of superlatives: "The top ten," "best-dressed," "best-selling," and "most popular."

At times we may look upon the 1950s with a certain smugness, pleased that we have escaped from the conformity of that era and returned to the values of the frontier's "rugged individualism." But have we? The following exercise gives you an opportunity to examine the degree to which we have escaped the pressures to conform.

**Assignment** Interview at least eight to 10 persons from one of these age groups: 14-18, 19-25, 26-35, 36-50, 51-65. Strive to avoid telling them exactly what you're doing since so many Americans wish to be thought of as self-reliant individualists. Keep a record of all responses to each of the 15 questions. Recording who said what is unnecessary.

### Survey questions



1. What is your favorite TV program?
2. What radio station do you listen to most often?
3. What is your favorite nonalcoholic beverage?
4. What movie did you go to see most recently?
5. What kind of car would you most want to own?
6. Who is your favorite male movie star?
7. What subject does your age group talk about most often?
8. What is your most valued material possession (an object)?
9. What do you value most that is not an object?
10. What do you value most that is on your person right now?
11. Who is your favorite TV actress?
12. What is your favorite all-time movie?
13. What book did you read last (not for an assignment)?
14. What is your favorite fast-food eating place?
15. What famous living person do you admire most?

**Survey results** Either orally or in writing, depending upon your teacher's directions, respond to the following questions:

1. Do the results of your survey suggest that today's Americans generally conform? Explain your answer.
2. What categories seem to show the highest conformity? Why?
3. Comment on the other results of your survey.
4. What agencies or institutions in our society tend to force conformity? How?
5. In your opinion, is it possible to avoid being a conformist in today's American society?
6. What arguments can you advance to defend conformity?

# NONCONFORMISTS - 1

**Background** In the mid-1950s a group emerged which called itself the Beat Generation. These individuals came to be popularly known as Beatniks. Repulsed at the mindless, robotlike conformity they saw in suburban America, they “dropped out” of society and formed their own small, isolated communities in areas such as the Venice West section of Los Angeles, the Greenwich Village area of New York City, and the Haight-Ashbury region of San Francisco. Beatniks seemed to reject all the values and items for which middle-class America worked and dreamed. Often living in filthy “pads,” their simple lifestyle, limited ambitions, and self-imposed exile from society made the terms “beat” or “beaten down” seem an apt description for them.

Because their “uniform” was so distinctive, the physical appearance of the Beatniks immediately set them apart. The men usually wore beards, sandals, and heavy sweaters, and the women wore black leotards, no lipstick, and so much eye shadow that people joked about their “raccoon eyes.” The group’s argot, or slang, reflected the expressions of black jazz musicians, with whom the Beats identified. Beatniks used words such as “dig,” “hey, man,” “cool,” “bread,” “hip,” “bug,” “spade” (Negro), and the universal “like” as in “like wow” or “like, you know.” Moreover, the Beatniks were early to experiment with marijuana, which they called “pot.”

Feeling certain mystical powers within themselves, they often wrote mediocre poetry and prose expressing their conversion to the philosophies of Zen and existentialism. The Beatniks owed much of their inspiration to what they called spontaneous expression—visions of creativity they received while drinking espresso in dark coffee houses. While listening to “cool” jazz, they might stand up and extemporaneously compose poetry to the sounds of a saxophone solo or the strumming of a guitar, all the while snapping their fingers to the musical beat and receiving encouragement from their fellow companions.

The typical Beat poetry was certainly never a contender for a Nobel Prize, but it was different, which is to say, nonconforming. The poetry was usually undisciplined, composed in free verse, and without rhyme. As a rule the topics dealt with were rather senseless. At other times, however, they delved into travel (a favorite pastime), hang-ups, love encounters, middle-class America, and Cold War politics. Two prominent titles of Beatnik literature, *Naked Lunch* and *Fried Shoes*, point to the degree of absurdity the Beats were willing to go.

Middle-class America, under the sometimes appropriate attacks of the Beat Generation, chose to ignore the weird “rebels” whose distasteful traits included, among other things, sleeping on dirty mattresses and failing to hold regular eight-to-five jobs. Without middle-class support it was difficult to achieve literary fame, yet a few of the dropouts did. Allen Ginsberg, Kenneth Rexroth, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, and Jack

## NONCONFORMISTS - 2

Kerouac are the best examples. Kerouac, a former football player and sailor, wrote *On the Road* over a period of three weeks (to which author Truman Capote jibed, "It isn't writing—it's typing"). Despite this speed, the book was a best seller in 1959, when more than 500,000 copies were sold. Although not a literary gem, *On the Road* became a Bible to Beatniks, appealing no doubt to those who enjoyed the themes of travel and sexual encounters. As a spokesman for his group, Kerouac also defended Beatniks against charges that they were un-American. He said: "We love everything—Billy Graham, the Big Ten, rock and roll, Zen, apple pie, Eisenhower. We dig it all ...."

**Assignment** If possible, read some of the good and bad Beat poetry of the 1950s. Then, to give you a feeling for their "message," try writing a poem in their free-verse, no-rhyme pattern. Here is an example of what a student working on this assignment might write:

○	When gray-flanneled husbands come home To cookie-cutter houses, They do so sober ... at twilight. (If they came home drunk or at night, They couldn't tell Their gray-green home From the green-gray home next door ... Or their paper doll wife and children From the paper doll wife and children In the green-gray home.)
○	And later, looking in the mirror Before climbing onto the Beautyrest For one of its guaranteed 7300 nights, They see passionless puppets Manipulated by the long fingers Of Madison Avenue, that purplish cancer Gnawing away the American soul That once silently contemplated Barly buffalo blocking out bleeding sunsets.
○	

# HUMOR - 1

**Humorists** The 1950s saw a “new” kind of humor and comedy emerge. Unlike earlier styles, comedians relied more heavily on wit, sarcasm, satire, and exaggeration—techniques that were appealingly refreshing in a decade described by many critics as bland. As in other eras, a few humorists had special appeal. Cartoonist Jules Feiffer and comics Mort Sahl, Shelly Berman, and the team of Mike Nichols and Elaine May were particularly big in the 1950s. Because of their insight and “feel” for the times, they likely will be remembered over more established funnymen like Milton Berle, George Gobel, Jackie Gleason, and Red Skelton, a few of the reigning comics of the decade.

Feiffer’s type of humor was often grim and always biting. His book of cartoons, *Sick, Sick, Sick: A Guide to Non-Confident Living*, while satirizing a popular best seller, was full of contemporary jibes at vulnerable Americans, particularly those in power. Berman incorporated everyday incidents into his act and developed them into ridiculous exaggerations. Sitting on a stool and talking into an imaginary telephone, he recounted experiences typical audiences had gone through: visiting the dentist, sleeping in a claustrophobic motel room, or holding a frustrating conversation over the phone with a three year old (“Is your mommy there?” Pause. “She’s where?”). Nichols and May contrived hilarious skits usually spoofing famous personalities (“Yes, I dated Al Schweitzer a few times”), classical music snobs, or the PTA; they ad libbed through a thick hailstorm of satire.

Perhaps the real genius and spokesman for comedians of the fifties was Sahl, a nervous, acid-tongued political monologist whom *Time* dubbed “a Will Rogers with fangs.” At other times he was called a “critic-comedian” and the “Beat Generation’s Cotton Mather.” Sahl used the daily newspaper as the basis for his routines, and the rolled-up paper became his customary prop when he appeared on stage. A nonconformist coming before audiences wearing casual slacks, a V-neck sweater, and an open-collared shirt, he immediately proceeded to zero in on targets he had been aiming at since beginning his nightclub circuit. He first appeared at San Francisco’s famous “Hungry i” in December 1953; later he was the first comic to be heard on record. His routine came off as a freely flowing association of ideas, and he separated jokes and topics with the words “Onward! Onward!”

Television, however, not nightclubs made Sahl’s name famous. He began in New York on Steve Allen’s variety shows and, censoring little of his material for “the tube,” ridiculed both the left and right wings of the political spectrum. He extended his invective to the “do-nothing” Eisenhower administration, as well as Congress, big business, and the human condition.

Before you try your hand at writing some jokes based on material from the fifties, read over some of these gems that came from the mind of Mort Sahl, “a thinking man’s comedian.”

- On Senator Joseph McCarthy: “I have a McCarthy jacket. It is like an Eisenhower jacket, except it has an extra zipper to go across the mouth.”
- On the military experience: “I was so close to MacArthur, I got radiation burns.”
- On Beatniks: “The new national holiday is Beat Wednesday, when the people in the coffee houses go to work for one day.”
- On J. Edgar Hoover and the FBI: “I see where J. Edgar Hoover has written a book. I think it’s called *How to Turn in Your Friends to the FBI for Fun and Profit*.”
- On capital punishment: “I believe in capital punishment—how else are they going to learn?”
- On his own comments: “I only have a few months to tell these jokes before they become treason.”
- On Ike: “President Eisenhower is in charge of everything, whenever Nixon leaves the country.”
- On the election of 1960: “Vote no—Keep the White House vacant for another four years.”
- On Werner von Braun, who during World War II was the “brains” behind Hitler’s V-2 rocket program and later was in charge of the United States’ Atlas space program: “He aimed at the stars, and often hit London.”
- On USA-USSR relations: “You know folks, the real irony of this Cold War is that for every American the Russians throw in jail, the (House Un-American Activities) committee throws an American in jail.”
- On the influential power of big business: “One of these days General Motors is going to get sore and cut the government off without a penny ... The Chase Manhattan Bank has several subsidiaries, you know—Western Germany, for one.”
- On President Eisenhower’s fondness for golf: “If you are in the administration, you have a lot of problems of policy, like whether or not to use an overlapping grip.”
- On himself: “I’m the intellectual voice of the era—which is a good measure of the era.”

**Assignment** Now it’s your turn to try some typical satire of the fifties. Use any combination of parody, ridicule, irony, and sarcasm, to poke fun at the lifestyle of the time. Keep in mind the information you’ve learned about the 1950s so far. The list is endless, but some of the more obvious subjects might be McCarthy, suburbia, rock and roll, Beatniks, Eisenhower, Edsel, fads and fashions, Cold War, movies, TV, and family life.

**Doodles** In 1953 Roger Price, a displaced Englishman who was writing one-line gags for some of TV’s top variety shows, convinced emcee Garry Moore to exhibit on TV a few examples of a new type of humor. These consisted of very simple drawings, or “Doodles,”

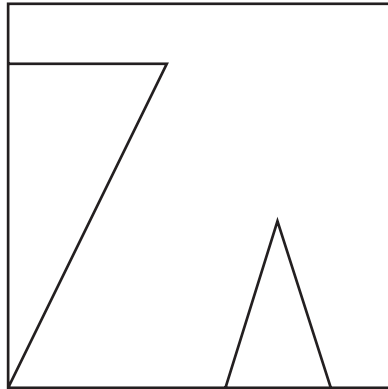
## HUMOR - 3

which Price thought were very funny when connected with the right punch line. Audiences agreed with him, and the next week he received more than 15,000 letters from viewers who wanted to see more of his Doodles. Success snowballed for Price, and within two years he had his own panel show and had published three volumes containing nothing but Doodles.

The fad was popular not only among adults but also with students, including those in elementary school. Not content to leave Doodles on paper, some creative high school students of the era invented what became known as “Living Doodles.” They required “only a rubber face and a good punch line.”

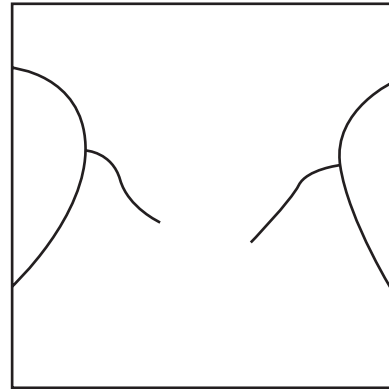
Look over these examples of Doodles and Living Doodles before creating some of your own:

What is this Doodle?



*It's a ship arriving too late to save a drowning witch.*

What is this Doodle?



*Two elephants not on speaking terms.*

### Living Doodles

- A boy with his index finger pushing in on his nose, eyes staring at the finger, cheeks drawn in, saying: “Johnny! Come get your dart!”
- A girl using her index fingers to pull the outside edges of her closed eyes back toward her ears, while announcing: “Mommy, you made the braids too tight!”

Can you now create some Doodles and Living Doodles of your own?

# PLANNING AN IDEAL WEEKEND

**Background** In 1954 *McCall's* first applied the term “togetherness” to the family social situation. The 1950s was an era in which the social function of the family unit was strongly emphasized, almost to the point of becoming the utopian ideal. Perhaps this was a reaction to the early development of the distinctive new phenomenon within the family—the teenager. Whatever the reason, during this decade many families consciously strove to do things together.

**Assignment:** Divided into groups of four, you are to pretend that you are a “typical” middle-class family of the fifties planning an ideal weekend. Delve into your knowledge of the period and come up with things that would be appropriate. Some of them may still sound good today, while others no doubt may seem to be corny or “square.” Just a few of the many “typical” activities you may wish to draw from are these:

- paint-by-numbers
- Sunday afternoon drive
- household tasks, inside and outside
- telephone
- movies or drive-in show
- Sunday dinner
- visit friends or relatives
- family games—Clue, Monopoly, Chinese Checkers, jigsaw puzzles, Tripoli
- TV—Saturday morning cartoons and children’s shows, live dramatic shows, Sunday evening entertainment shows, etc.
- card games—canasta, bridge
- religious services
- travel games to play in the car
- sports or social organizations recreation or shopping projects to earn money
- baseball game or bowling league
- picnic or barbecue

Here are the ages and sexes of your imaginary 1950s family:

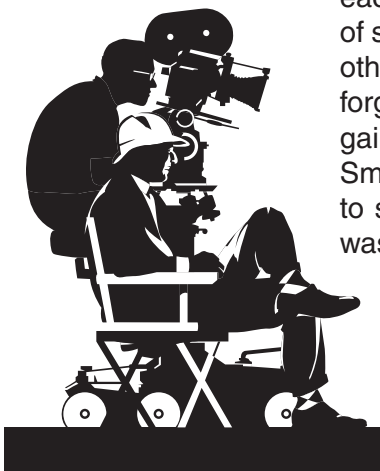
- father, 40
- mother, 39
- daughter, 17
- son, 9

Make a chart showing what each person would do on his/her ideal family weekend. The chart should include evening activities for Friday, plus morning, afternoon, and evening activities for both Saturday and Sunday. Be as detailed as the size of your chart allows. For example, instead of simply saying “Babysat for neighbors,” you might say, “Watched *Leave It To Beaver* while babysitting two neighbor children, put them to bed, earned \$1.05 for three hours’ work.”

# MOVIES, TV, AND POP MUSIC - 1

**Movies** Even though Americans by the millions went to the movies in the fifties, attendance had dropped severely since the high-water mark set in 1946. The reason was not difficult to surmise: TV during the late 1940s and early 1950s kept people home watching “the tube.” Although TV lessened Hollywood’s profits, the movie industry treated TV as an upstart. The studios had their public relations departments grind out platitudes—Movies Are Better Than Ever or “Go See A Movie Tonight”—and create trumped-up stories about “new” and “exciting” young stars—Tab Hunter, Sal Mineo, Rock Hudson, Kim Novak, and Marilyn Monroe—for the public to swoon over.

Hollywood’s hometown magazines—*Photoplay*, *Silver Screen*, and *Modern Screen*—invaded the palatial estates of its personalities to record for eager readers all about the secret lives of the stars. It worked—or at least it helped. More than 12 million teenage girls and sentimental women paid 20¢ a copy each month to read about the intimate romances and even favorite recipes of screen idols. Such magazines kept certain names in the public mind. Another attempt by the film industry to survive was its use of gimmicks. Almost forgotten now, but always worth a laugh, are Hollywood’s bold attempt to gain back its followers by experimenting with 3-D movies (*The Deepies*), Smell-o-Vision, or one technique where the theater seats were hooked up to small charges of electricity. The only real survivor of these innovations was the wide screen, stereophonic sound process.



Fortunately for the huge California industry, its employees, and an eager worldwide audience, Hollywood stayed solvent and turned out several outstanding films with striking characters and memorable scenes. Although the best films of each year don’t always win the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences top award—the Oscar—the 1950s had its share of excellent films even while cynics were writing about the fall of Hollywood. Here are some of the decade’s memorable films. Viewers liking drama enjoyed *A Place in the Sun*, *On the Waterfront*, *Separate Tables*, *Marty*, *The Rose Tattoo*, *Shane*, *From Here To Eternity*, and *North By Northwest*. Music lovers thrilled to *An American In Paris*, *High Society*, *Seven Brides For Seven Brothers*, *Gigi*, and *Singing in the Rain*. History and adventure enthusiasts could get lost in *The Bridge on the River Kwai*, *Ben-Hur*, *Around the World in 80 Days*, and *The Ten Commandments*. Other films were memorable because of their strong character appeal star attraction: Marion Brando as Zapata in *Viva Zapata*, James Dean in *Rebel Without a Cause*, Shirley Booth in *Come Back Little Sheba*, Frank Sinatra in *The Man With the Golden Arm*, and Susan Hayward in *I Want to Live!* Conversely, Hollywood was also responsible for such drivel as *Godzilla*, *Bwana Devil*, *Francis Joins the Army*, *The Monster From the Black Lagoon*, *The Blob*, *Rodan*, *The Robe*, *Tammy and the Bachelor*, *Demetrius and the Gladiators*, *Green Mansions*, and scores of other “B” westerns and science-fiction non-epics.

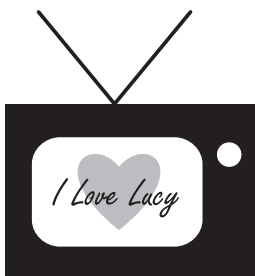
If Hollywood had to battle dwindling box office receipts in the fifties, the big studios also had to withstand the impact of the foreign film market which became big business from 1956 to 1960. Foreign film profits rose 500% in those years. For whatever reason—probably quality and explicit love scenes—more sophisticated moviegoers stood in line to see *And God Created Woman* with Brigitte Bardot (France), *Rashomon* (Japan), *Room at the Top* (England), *The Seventh Seal* (Sweden), and *La Strada* (Italy). The

## MOVIES, TV, AND POP MUSIC - 2

big profits of the 1930s and 1940s, when Americans went to the movies on a weekly basis, were over. Hollywood would have to be content with fewer quality films, more outdoor epics. TV was now a coequal, a competitor, but it was also an outlet to sell most of Tinsel Town's vintage products.

**Television** Critics of television in the late 1940s were poor forecasters. Almost to a person they predicted doom for this infant industry, yet, by 1952, TV surpassed radio and films as the nation's top communications industry. Intellectuals prided themselves on not buying the "idiot box." Preachers condemned TV for what it would do to youngsters' morals; educators bemoaned the low level of intelligence required to watch shows full of mindless pap. All this criticism, interestingly enough, came after Americans had already spent \$15.6 billion to buy sets with 8" and 12" screens. Even famous television commentator Edward R. Murrow, the decade's top newsman, said, "If television and radio are to be used for the entertainment of all of the people all of the time, we have come perilously close to discovering the real opiate of the people." Murrow came very close with his prediction. By 1959, the average family in America was watching nearly six hours a day, seven days a week in front of "the light that failed." Criticism notwithstanding, TV grew enormously, becoming a vast wasteland for some, solid entertainment for others.

Although the majority of the American people may not be discriminating critics, they are, because of rating systems, the ultimate judges of commercial success. Occasionally critics, ratings, and the people agree, and excellent television is the result. In the 1950s the top shows, week after week, may have been better than their counterparts we see today. In fact, some critics call the fifties the Golden Age of Television. Drama buffs were ecstatic about the quality of live dramatic shows on the tube. *The Hallmark Hall of Fame*, *Playhouse 90*, *Kraft Television Theatre*, *Studio One*, and *The U.S. Steel Hour* served up such outstanding programs as *1984*, *Requiem For a Heavyweight*, *Twelve Angry Men*, *Marty*, and *Days of Wine and Roses*, the last four being turned into memorable motion pictures. In these plays and others just like them, many fine actors got their start (e.g., Paul Newman, Rod Steiger, James Dean, Eva Marie Saint, and Joanne Woodward).



Television sit-coms (situation comedies), as highly predictable and repetitive as they usually were, were a different breed than the drama, and probably should be judged separately. Who can argue against a successful comedy? And there were many: *I Love Lucy*, *Ozzie and Harriet*, *Leave It To Beaver*, *Our Miss Brooks*, *The Burns and Allen Show*, *Jack Benny*, *Mr. Peepers*, *Dobie Gillis*, *The Bob Cummings Show*, *December Bride*, *The Phil Silvers Show*, *Father Knows Best*, and *Make Room For Daddy*.

Always experimenting—when they were forced to—network programmers scheduled crime shows and westerns and soon they, too, had their followers. *Naked City*, *Dragnet*, *Line-Up*, *The Defenders*, and *M-Squad* delighted cops and robbers fans, while western buffs watched weekly favorites *Cheyenne*, *Maverick*, *Gunsmoke*, *Have Gun—Will Travel*, and *The Rifleman*.

Other shows popular in the fifties for more specialized groups or ages need to be mentioned. For children: *Kukla, Fran, and Ollie*; *Howdy Doody*; and *The Mickey Mouse Club*. For concerned citizens: network news shows, *See It*

## MOVIES, TV, AND POP MUSIC - 3

*Now, Person To Person*, and *You Are There*. For those hooked on the game shows: *What's My Line?*, *The \$64,000 Question*, *You Bet Your Life*, *Twenty-One*, and *Beat the Clock*. (Quiz shows like *Twenty-One* and *The \$64,000 Question* were found to be rigged in 1958-1959, and public pressure and government hearings forced their cancellation.)

In summary, no one doubts the immense impact of TV since its phenomenal growth in the 1950s. But the debatable question is, What kind of impact? Said one critic of the 1970s who bemoans the fact that TV programmers aim at the passive, middle audience of American viewers: "The reason they call television a medium is because it is never well-done or rare."

**Music** The popular music industry of the fifties can be divided into roughly two separate periods. The first can be labeled "pop" and reached its zenith from 1950 to 1956. The second period is clearly "rock and roll" and was an amazingly strong influence on American life in the late fifties. In the first half of the decade, the pop music on records, radio, and TV shows was moderately supported by all ages. Teenagers were not yet the big buyers they would later become. The songs and artists were for the most part carryovers from the late 1940s, and, although popular enough, pop music was never the financial success rock and roll was to be when teenagers, turned off by the blandness of popular music, latched on to the primitive beat and rock idols. The result was a billion-dollar industry. In fact, teenagers by 1958 were buying 70% of all records, purchasing the durable 45 rpm records or the long-playing 33-1/3 rpm albums.

The music of the fifties we now label "pop" reached its peak about 1954. Generally speaking, artists sang simple ballads, catchy up-tempo tunes, hit it lucky with a novelty number that was a smash for a few weeks, and then sank into oblivion. Here are some of the most famous artists from the early and mid-1950s and the tunes they are associated with: Rosemary Clooney, *Come On-a My House*; Kay Starr, *Wheel of Fortune*; Teresa Brewer, *Music! Music! Music!*; Jo Stafford, *You Belong To Me*; Frankie Laine, *Mule Train*; Patti Page, *Tennessee Waltz*; Ernie Ford, *Sixteen Tons*; Four Lads, *Standing on the Corner*; Four Aces, *Three Coins in the Fountain*; Nat King Cole, *Pretend*; Frank Sinatra, *Young at Heart*; Tony Bennett, *Stranger in Paradise*; Perry Como, *Wanted*; Eddie Fisher, *Oh My Pa-Pa*; and Johnny Mathis, *Chances Are*.

Some music of the fifties, before or after the advent of rock and roll, became popular because of trends or intangible whims in American tastes. Who could have predicted the soaring popularity of the Calypso craze as sung by Harry Belafonte? ... the David Saville-Chipmunks collaborative hits? ... Stan Freeberg's parodies such as *St. George and the Dragon Net*? More predictable were the piano artistry and widespread popularity of Liberace or Roger Williams' *Autumn Leaves*; or the instrumental successes from the big bands: Leroy Anderson, *The Typewriter Song*; Nelson Riddle, *Lisbon Antigua*; Jimmy Dorsey, *So Rare*; Les Baxter, *April in Portugal*; and Percy Faith, *Song from the Moulin Rouge*. Even Mitch Miller, a friendly, bearded orchestra leader whose music required an audience singalong (at home, no less), was well within the mainstream of acceptable music standards in America.

## MOVIES, TV, AND POP MUSIC - 4

Then came rock and roll and nothing in popular music was ever the same. Although opinions differ on who or what started the upbeat trend, the after-shocks shook the basic foundations of American music, and, with the new consumer power of teenagers, rock dislodged its predecessor. Who started rock? Many black singers and groups were steadily gaining popularity in the early fifties, but according to most music historians, rock officially began with a tune written for a 1955 exploitation movie, *I Was A Teenage Werewolf*. Bill Haley and the Comets' tune blazed the trail for rock and roll. From then on, the new music so completely dominated the Top 40 charts that by 1957, one of TV's most venerable shows, *Your Hit Parade*, was canceled because its pop singers looked and sounded absolutely silly performing rock hits of the week.

As popular as Haley and his Comets were, they didn't turn rock and roll into a teenage religion. That task was done by a 21-year-old Memphis, Tennessee, truck driver named Elvis Aaron Presley. Starting on the Dorsey Brothers' TV show, Presley electrified audiences everywhere and provoked a national furor on the morality of his trembling, sexy voice, and his loose body gyrations. The whole affair gradually dissipated when his rock imitators followed suit. The public outcry subsided from futility. The Age of Rock had arrived and, despite the predictions that he wouldn't last, Presley was king.

The teenage adulation for Elvis in the fifties was incredible. Only Frank Sinatra in the 1940s and later the Beatles in the 1960s reached similar plateaus of popularity and fame. Presley turned out hit record after hit record, followed by albums that sold in the millions. The string started with *Heartbreak Hotel*, *Don't Be Cruel*, and *Blue Suede Shoes*. It continued with *Love Me Tender*, *Teddy Bear*, and *Hound Dog*. By 1960, Elvis had sold \$120-million worth of records, sheet music, merchandise, and theater tickets for his budding acting career in Hollywood .

Trying to cash in on Presley's success, several imitators sprang up, but none of them ever came close to Presley's throne. Singers and songs like Rick Nelson, *Poor Little Fool*; Fabian, *Turn Me Loose*; Frankie Avalon, *Venus*; Bobbie Darin, *Splish, Splash*; Pat Boone, *April Love*; and the Everly Brothers, *All I Have To Do Is Dream* scored very well in record sales and fed a huge teenage hunger for idols. Very often, Dick Clark's *American Bandstand* TV program showcased these singers.

Presley's impact, if closely scrutinized, shows that after his climb to the top, African-American rock singers and groups, with years of struggle already behind them, became respectable to white teenager consumers. Artists and records like Lloyd Price, *Personality*; Fats Domino, *Blueberry Hill*; The Coasters, *Charlie Brown*; Little Richard, *Tutti Frutti*; The Clovers, *Blue Velvet*; and Chuck Berry, *Roll over Beethoven* were listed on bestselling charts throughout the last few years of the decade.

# CULTURAL COMMITTEE #1

## *What's My Line?* TV Script

**Background** Your group has been assigned to write and then perform a script similar to those used for a most popular panel quiz show of the fifties, *What's My Line?*, in which four panelists tried to guess a guest's occupation within 10 "no" responses. When the show came on the air in 1950, the panelists were selected for their intellectual ability. Later, to beef up the ratings, a comedian and an inquisitive woman were added. The show's moderator over the years was former newsman John Charles Daly. The typical panel in the 1950s included actress Arlene Francis, columnist Dorothy Kilgallen, publisher and wit Bennett Cerf, and comedian Steve Allen.

**Assignment** Using a simple formula, the show survived and attained high ratings for many years. Your group will simulate that formula. Pick one person to be moderator and four to be panelists. The other members will be contestants, who will think up interesting occupations but will not tell the other five. When the time comes, each contestant will be introduced by "Daly" as he/she signs in ("Will the next contestant sign in, please?"). Making sure the panelists don't see, a sign indicating the occupation should be flashed to the audience. Then the panelists, using a 20-question format—but getting only 10—try to guess the guest's occupation. The real show's contestants most often had ludicrous, far-out jobs (e.g., a man who put sticks in popsicles, a man who sold church steeples, and a lady who polished jelly beans, etc.)

The opening question should alternate between the four panelists. The moderator has 10 small cards to indicate how many questions are left ("four down and six to go, Mr. Cerf is next"). For every "no" answer from the contestant, another card is turned over. Each panelist asks questions until he/she gets a negative response. It can be a challenging game if the panelists use some logic (i.e., a no answer may eliminate several possibilities—like "Do you do this work by yourself?"). Panelists should not rush and ask questions impulsively.

Here are some examples of good *What's My Line?* questions:

- Are you self-employed?
- Do you deal with a product? a service?
- Do people come to you? men or women?
- Are they happier when they leave?
- Do you wear a uniform while doing this?
- Is the product bigger than a bread box? smaller than an elephant?
- Do you need a college education to do what you do?

*A final comment:* Everyone should be very cordial. On the real show the panelists introduced each other as they appeared on camera and the last panelist introduced moderator John Charles Daly.

## CULTURAL COMMITTEE #2

### *Dragnet* TV Script

**Background** When *Dragnet* appeared on NBC-TV in 1952, most Americans were eager for a realistic cop show. For the next seven years, Sergeant Joe Friday was the cop for millions who anxiously awaited each Thursday night for the beat of *Dragnet's* theme song which preceded one of the fifties' top TV shows.

Joe Friday, his partner officer Frank Smith, and the format for *Dragnet* were the creations of Jack Webb, an actor who not only starred in the series but also produced it and wrote many of the tight scripts. Webb designed *Dragnet* to show the “deadpan realism” of the routine procedures police use to ferret out the criminal element. Most of the cases were taken from the files of the Los Angeles Police Department, and the same city was used for locales and color. As the show's tagline made clear, “Only the names are changed to protect the innocent.” The dialogue of each show was simple, terse, and clear. It usually started out with Friday's voice-over as pictures of Los Angeles were shown on the screen. He would say: “It was Wednesday, July 12. It was a scorching day in Los Angeles. We were working the Day Watch out of Forgery Division. My partner's Frank Smith. The boss is Captain Welsh. My name's Friday.” (Dum-de-dum-dum musical theme). Then the background was given for that night's story. Viewers were educated to police lingo like “R and I” (Records and Information) and “M.O.” (Modus operandi—how the murder or crime was committed). What made *Dragnet* a unique cop show, however, was Friday's quiet, no-nonsense, relentless questioning of suspects, most of whom were colorful types. Suspects usually got the same retort from Sergeant Friday: “All I want is the facts ....”

Due to Friday's—and Jack Webb's—popularity, Badge 714 of the LAPD became famous. During the 1953-1954 TV season, *Dragnet* rivaled *I Love Lucy* for the top spot in the ratings throughout the country. As expected from a top show, imitators soon followed *Dragnet* on network TV, but none of them ever equaled the popularity of Friday, Smith, “just the facts,” and the dum-de-dum-dum musical theme.

**Assignment** Using many of the phrases in this handout, your group will work up a script with sharp, crisp dialogue—cop talk. Concentrate on one or two brief scenes which might reveal the character of Friday and policemen investigating in the *Dragnet*-style. Much of the dialogue can be ad-libbed, suspects responding to the typical police questioning of Friday and Smith. Much of your script, however, should be polished enough so that a narrator (a second Joe Friday?) can tie the story together for your “viewers.”

# CULTURAL COMMITTEE #3

## *Ozzie and Harriet* TV Script

**Background** Many critics were puzzled at the success of *Ozzie and Harriet*, a family situation comedy with the most receptive laugh track in television. Perhaps the popularity stemmed from the predictable bumbling of Ozzie Nelson, the father of the clan, who never worked yet always kept his family well-heeled and in good spirits; perhaps it was Harriet, the ever-devoted wife, usually cooking meals or sewing on buttons but always there to end a conversation with a witty phrase or two; perhaps it was David, the oldest of the two boys, so often clever, levelheaded, and solid; perhaps it was Ricky (later Rick), the mischievous, unpredictable “normal” boy, who literally grew up on the show as it transferred from radio to TV in 1952 and who became a rock and roll idol with a passel of gold records and a concert tour nearly equal to Elvis Presley’s.

The show’s success always relied on basic everyday situations. Conversations took place in the spacious kitchen, David’s fraternity house, the local emporium (department store), the friendly neighborhood malt shops (which catered to Ozzie’s insatiable appetite for ice cream), the dining room at supper time, or the backyard. The humor came not from the dialogue, which was not funny by itself, but more from the interaction within the family and in situations involving friends and acquaintances.

**Assignment** As a group, the first item to decide is who plays which roles. Select four to play the Nelsons. Then discuss what kind of situations (two or three) would produce the most humor from “typical” happenings. Add characters as the scene changes. Some favorite regulars on the show throughout the fifties were Doc Williams, a good-natured physician and neighbor of the Nelsons; “Thorny” Thornberry, who lived next door and always seemed to please the quizzical Ozzie as they talked about life over the backyard fence or on the back steps; the soda jerk at the malt shop, who always had new and exotic flavors of ice cream; Wally Plumstead, David’s plump and comical fraternity brother, who ate everything in sight (usually a third helping of Harriet’s apple pie) and never studied at college; and Barry, a seven-year-old kid with whom Ozzie had humorous conversations. You may want to add girl friends, some fraternity brothers, or other locals. David and Rick obeyed their parents and called them mom and pop. Whatever can be said of the Nelson family and friends, they became to the American people as comfortable as old shoes, and their weekly ratings bore this fact out. To clarify or add continuity to your scenes, you may want to have a narrator and someone with large cards specifying the “malt shop,” or “emporium.” Let your teacher know when your creative efforts are ready to be unveiled!

# CULTURAL COMMITTEE #4 - 1

## *Rebel Without a Cause* Dramatization

**Background** October 3, 1955, Warner Brothers proudly presents *Rebel Without a Cause*, the year's most powerful portrayal, starring James Dean, the overnight sensation of *East of Eden*; co-starring Natalie Wood, Jim Backus, and Sal Mineo as Plato; directed by Nicholas Ray; filmed in CinemaScope and color.

Ask anyone who was a teenager in the fifties about James Dean. The response will probably be a sad recollection of his death, his cool image on the screen, or his short, but brilliant career. He left to American youth that kind of legacy. When you read a biography of Dean (there are several), you are impressed that he made only three films, *East of Eden*, *Rebel Without a Cause*, and *Giant*. In fact, when he was killed driving his new Porsche Spyder near Salinas, California, on September 30, 1955, only *East of Eden* had been released to the public. *Rebel Without a Cause* came out a week after his death. Immediately a cult sprang up around Dean and grew to enormous size. There are James Dean fan clubs!

The outpouring of grief following the car accident was incredible, perhaps comparable in impact only to Rudolph Valentino's death in the 1920s. Fans paid 25¢ to see the wrecked Porsche and 50¢ to sit behind the wheel where their idol was killed. In Los Angeles, students from local high schools were allowed to view the car as a warning to drive carefully. In Greece, many grief-stricken youth wore black armbands. Thousands of busts of the actor were grabbed up; phony shreds of hair, photographs, record albums, bubble-gum cards, and switch-blade knives labeled "The James Dean Special" were hawked by commercial concerns. Red jackets—Dean's "uniform" in *Rebel*—sold by the thousands for \$22.75. A new cult, "Deanery," had arrived. Some Dean zealots refused to believe he was dead and held to a theory that he had been maimed and disfigured. A curious fact is that on the first anniversary of Dean's crash, more than 3,000 people turned up in the actor's hometown, Fairmount, Indiana, to put flowers on Dean's grave, a ritual which has continued ever since.

Both dead and alive, James Dean molded the thoughts and feelings of American teenagers in new ways. Whereas "the idols of their parents were lifeless symbols of the status quo," wrote David Dalton in *James Dean: The Mutant King*, "James Dean gave adolescents a face, his face, and with this communal image they could define and defend themselves." Thus Dean became an agent for the transformation of teenagers looking for their identities: his immediate effect can be measured by the speed with which he was adopted as their idol. Perhaps you have to have felt the full tone of the fifties to fully understand the depth of this idol worship.

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While the fact remains that he received two Academy Award Best Actor nominations posthumously (after his death), for *East of Eden* in 1955 and for *Giant* in 1956, Dean's career and personality is best represented in *Rebel Without a Cause*. This was a story of teenage problems and of the trials of the first day at a new high school. The following pages sketch out the skeleton of the script which elevated Dean to stardom. He played the role of Jim Stark, a new boy at Dawson High School trying to adjust and make new friends. Not necessarily a troublemaker, Stark runs into a series of incidents which eventually lead to tragedy and finally to understanding.

**Assignment** Your group or committee will, instead of writing a script, silently act out the scenes from *Rebel Without a Cause*, while one of you reads a narration to connect the scenes and so tell the story of Jim Stark's first day at Dawson High. Another member should be the group's director to make sure the "actors" are prepared and emote properly. Costumes, props, and exaggerated facial expressions would certainly add realism to the silent acting. You may choose to use only three or four of the scenes, but the narrator should give some background on Dean, his impact on teenagers, his career, and a background of the film and the missing scenes.

### Characters (in order of appearances)

- Jim Stark: a confused 17-year-old teenager with a weak father image, who wants love and tenderness. He tries to act like a man.
- Judy: a 16-year-old teenager who receives no love at home and who is confused about what kind of friends she should have. Her parents are very strict.
- Plato: a 15-year-old teenager "deserted" by a divided family. He sees Jim as a father image.
- Buzz: leader of the gang, who feels threatened by Jim's attempt to be part of the group; aggressive and tough.
- The gang: all suffering from lack of parental understanding, trying to find identities.
- Mr. Stark: henpecked husband; indecisive; he tries to understand Jim's "growing pains" and calls him "Jimbo," which Jim hates.
- Mrs. Stark: domineering wife and mother; argumentative, unable to relate to her son's problems and past history of trouble.

### Story sequence (10 scenes)

- **Scene 1** Jim Stark is drunk. He is hauled into Juvenile Court and questioned by indifferent authorities, except one, a Detective Ray. Judy is there, having been picked up wandering around late at night. Plato is there, too, for shooting a puppy. Jim takes his frustrations out by pounding and kicking the detective's desk. The parents then pick up their kids, wondering how they got there.

## CULTURAL COMMITTEE #4 - 3

- **Scene 2** Jim's first day at Dawson High. Judy ignores Jim's offer of a ride to school, preferring to grab a ride from Buzz and the gang. The gang sees Jim as an outsider, which he is.
- **Scene 3** A field trip to a nearby planetarium for a lecture on the heavens. In the dark, during the lecture on the constellation Taurus the Bull, the gang, including Buzz and Judy, are clowning around and chewing gum arrogantly. Jim sits in front of them, and tries to make status points with them by quietly saying "Moo." He hopes the gang will approve of his humorous interruption of the lecture, but instead they think he is horning in on their fun. They feel provoked enough to taunt him, implying that he may be a coward ("I'll bet he fights with cows"). Plato warns Jim not to make enemies with Buzz and Judy, both of whom are "wheels" at school.
- **Scene 4** After the lecture Jim and Plato come out to see Jim's '50 Mercury with a flat tire, slashed by one of the gang who now sit smugly on its hood and fenders. One of them makes a sound like a chicken, and Buzz crows, ridiculing Jim. Being called "chicken" makes Jim blow up (he "messed up" a guy who called him that at his last school). The gang eggs him on into a switchblade fight with Buzz. The fight is stopped by an adult—after both draw blood—but not before Buzz challenges Jim to the ultimate choose-off, a "chickierun."
- **Scene 5** Jim goes home to change his clothes (he had been overdressed in a suit and tie). He puts on his red jacket and blue denims, grabs some cake and milk, and then encounters his father. Mr. Stark is wearing an apron and is down on his hands and knees cleaning up spilled soup from the carpet. Their dialogue concerns why he is taking supper into his wife's bedroom and why he is so upset over the mess. Mr. Stark sees the blood on Jim's shirt and wants some answers. Jim is reluctant to talk about it ("We don't have time"). Dad tells Jim that all his problems will dissolve soon and in 10 years "You'll laugh at yourself for thinking this is so important." Jim shouts, "Ten years ... 10 years!" and leaves for the chickie run in his "battle uniform."
- **Scene 6** On the bluffs outside of town amidst souped-up cars and streaming headlights, Buzz and Jim, adversaries of the afternoon, meet at the edge of the cliff briefly. A short conversation follows. Buzz: "I like you, you know?" Jim: "Buzz, what are we doing this for?" Buzz: "We got to do something. Don't we?" The chickierun, in which drivers of stolen cars race toward a cliff and jump from the cars just before going over the edge (first one to jump is a "chicken"), ends in tragedy. Buzz catches his jacket sleeve in the door latch and is killed instantly as his car goes over the cliff and crashes in flames below. Everyone involved quickly disappear for fear of being caught by the police.
- **Scene 7** Jim goes home, enters through the kitchen door, and grabs a quart of milk. He rolls the cold bottle over his hot forehead. Hoping to receive love and understanding from his parents, Jim

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finds them watching the car accident on the late news. Jim tells them he is involved, but they cannot cope with the reality of the situation. Mrs. Stark doesn't want Jim to go to the police, but Jim replies, "I was in a crime, mom! A boy was killed." Mr. Stark, timid throughout, agrees with her ("You know you did wrong. That's the main thing, isn't it?"). Desiring help and understanding, Jim comes up with nothing. Screaming "Dad," Jim pulls his father by the neck down the stairs and then runs out amid his mother's shrieks.

- **Scene 8** Jim drives to the police station to ask for help from sympathetic Detective Ray, but the gang is there and they assume Jim is planning to 'tell all.' He slips away when he finds Ray is out on another case. He is now with Judy, and they kiss. She tells him she knows of a place where they can hide.
- **Scene 9** At an abandoned villa in the hills, Jim and Judy are joined by Plato, who followed them to warn Jim that the gang is close behind. The three, to relieve tension, play a kind of hide-and-seek game after Plato gives them a mock tour of the deserted estate. Plato later falls asleep while Jim and Judy, seeking privacy, escape from the gang, which comes hunting them.
- **Scene 10** Jim, Judy, Plato, the gang, and the police converge on the planetarium for the final scene. Hiding in the planetarium's dark chambers, Plato believes Jim had abandoned him in the nearby villa. Disbelieving Jim's apologies for leaving, he rushes outside with an empty pistol, only to be shot and killed by an overanxious policeman. The full squad is there, with bullhorns and bright lights. Jim and Judy, the Starks, and the police all tower over Plato's body. Jim zips up Plato's jacket and says, "He was always cold." Jim's father, comforting his son at last, says, "You did everything a man could." The sun comes up as the police cars drive off.

# CULTURAL COMMITTEE #5 - 1

## *Juke Box Jury* TV Show and Song Composers

**Background** In the early fifties Peter Potter's *Juke Box Jury* was a TV show to which musical artists brought copies of their records to be played and judged by a panel of celebrities, none of whom was an expert but all of whom were in the entertainment field. First shown nationally in 1953, the show was both a showcase for new records and a chance for entertainers to be seen informally as they bantered with each other over the merits of particular songs, which were usually ballad and novelty tunes rather than rock and roll.

**Assignment** Your group of eight or so will divide into three panelists, a moderator (Peter Potter), and four performers who will compose and put on cassette tape their songs. (Panelists help the composers write their songs but try to be impartial when the "records" are later played.)

Most composers will probably write rock and roll numbers, feeling that they will be easier to compose and more fun to perform on tape. If you do a rock and roll piece, make up a clever but appropriate name (e.g., The Penguins, Dicky Do and the Don'ts, Frankie Avalon, Pat Boone, Bill Haley and the Comets), but don't choose these real names! While you are writing, think of songs that were big hits in the fifties. These songs might spark ideas for titles and lyrics. For example, *Teen Angel* was a sad song about a teenage tragedy in which a girlfriend returns to a car stalled on the railroad tracks to grab her steady's high school ring and is killed by a train. The song, then, is a lament for her as the singer "speaks" to Teen Angel. Listen to several such songs if you have access to that decade's records. Notice that most rock and roll relied on beat, usually a harmonizing "do-way" or "shoo-dooby-do-wah."

The three panelists and moderator should make up signs with their names on them (real personalities from the fifties?) and fix up a TV stage-set with "Juke Box Jury" letters written on a large sheet or butcher paper. First you help the composers write their songs. Then, as a panelist, when the show is on the air, you give your opinion about the songs, using phrases like: "It's got a good, solid beat and seems easy to dance to," or "I just love it. The words and beat go together so well" or "The words are not clear. I find it difficult to listen to," etc.

Peter Potter, the moderator, will make sure you don't use the words "hit" or "miss" just after first hearing the song. After asking for opinions from all three panelists, Potter will ask panelists to pass over to him small pieces of paper with "Hit" or "Miss" written on them. Dramatically, he tallies them and says things like "I have a hit! I have a hit!" or "I have a miss!" or "In the opinion of tonight's Juke Box Jury, *Tear Stains on My Pillow* by Bobbie Bounce and the Seniors is proclaimed a ... hit!" Applause follows, as it does at all appropriate spots. (On the real show, unknown to the panel, the artist sometimes sat behind the

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curtains, and, if the song was judged a hit, he/she was brought on stage and briefly interviewed.) Before departing, the artist thanks the panel and hopes for huge sales.

Of course, Peter Potter will have insured that your show has a proper beginning: “Hello, I’m Peter Potter and welcome to ....” He will explain the show, introduce guest panelists from that era, etc. Then he will also make sure that it has a proper ending: “We thank you, the record-buying public, for watching *Juke Box Jury*. Until next week, when we listen to more of your music and decide whether the songs will be judged a hit or a miss, goodnight, everybody.”

*Final reminder* Your first response to creating songs may be to think like people think in this decade. Never forget, however, that you are simulating the 1950s. Therefore, the theme, story, and lyrics of the songs you create should mirror the fifties.

**High school's influence** High school days! To many, merely thinking about their experiences as a teenager during those three or four years causes them to quiver and shake their heads. To others, secondary school brings a warm smile and pleasant memories. Ralph Keyes, author of *Is There Life After High School?*, interviewed hundreds who expressed both sides. Keyes found that whatever the personal opinion, high school was the most indelible experience in their young lives, perhaps in their entire lives. If this is true, or even partially true, it is important for students today, as a frame of reference for upcoming activities, to read an overview of high school and teenage lifestyles in the fifties. Study this overview sheet carefully so that you can compare its information with that you collect from your research and interviews.

Keyes' thought-provoking book, published in 1976, is full of insights about the universality of the high school experience. The most memorable quote, a result of his interviewing, is certainly an argumentative point: "Just as interesting as what people do recall from high school is what they don't—like education, the supposed reason for gathering. An occasionally inspiring teacher may stand out in the memory—but rarely anything that went on in a classroom beyond passing notes." In short, most people recall very little that they supposedly learned in their academic classes! This is an incredible statement, even if it is only partially correct. A study of high schools in the fifties, then, can be used to bear out this simulation's premise: that what happens to us, socially and culturally, and in our peer groups, influences us as much as any congressional law or treaty.

**High school society** Students are difficult to analyze, categorize, label, and generalize about—whether talking about the fifties or today. Yet, few would argue against Keyes' theory that high school for most 1950s teenagers (and today?) was a scramble to accumulate "status points." That is, high school was an attempt to climb the ladder of success. The ultimate goal was homecoming queen and cheerleader for girls and varsity quarterback and student body president for boys. To be among the group, often called "socies," was a real and serious aspiration for many teens in the fifties. Those who failed, because of appearance, personality, or apathy, were labeled "normies" or "weirdos" in some regions of the country. The minority called weirdos, hoods, learnies, kissies, etc., often basked in their notoriety and exaggerated their appearance, language, or behavior.

It was the "normies," however, who were destined to inherit the world after high school, a point Keyes emphasizes. The strong and enduring frustrations left over from school might drive, inspire, or obsess the leftouts or "outies" to hate the "innies" so that they worked to scale amazing heights in the political, entertainment, and corporate worlds. Richard Nixon, Janis Joplin, Gregory Peck, and many others are proof of a driving urge to get revenge for a miserable time in high school.

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**Conformity** Whatever points cannot be resolved in a debate on high school society, there is general agreement that teenagers of the fifties were conformist by nature and by choice. The aim of most teens was to be in the middle, not to make waves in a society which valued moderation and sameness. Conformity in appearance, speech, values, musical tastes, and behavior seemed to be a hallmark of the fifties.

**Appearance** It would be easy to say that the 16 million or so teenagers in the fifties all dressed the same for all 10 years, but that simply wouldn't be true. Fashions changed as often as they do today, and not everyone was herded into buying the latest fad. In addition, different sections of the country had particular fashion trends. Yet, there was a sameness in appearance among teens in these years. One San Francisco senior claimed, "We don't ask each other what we're going to wear each day. We just know." Striving to reach the "average" and the national desire for moderation, youth wore clothes that were scaled down versions of what adults wore, at least until the appearance and popularity of personalities James Dean and Elvis Presley.

Generalizing about teenage appearance is possible. Boys often wore polished cotton pants, denims, or Levis with button-down collar shirts ("Ivy League style"), and at one time in the mid-fifties they wore mandarin-collar striped shirts. Everyday shoes might be the Pat Boone-popularized white bucks, saddle oxfords, Thom McAn Snap Jacks, or penny loafers. As images of the juvenile delinquent were popularized by actors Marion Brando in *The Wild One* and James Dean in *Rebel Without a Cause*, some boys wore leather jackets, jeans, T-shirts, and boots. Hair styles were usually very short (crew cuts, flat tops with fenders), but leather-jacketed "hoods" liked their hair longer and full of greasy hair oil, combed back into a "duck's tail" which still allowed a curl or two to hang down loosely over the forehead.

Girls' fashions changed more often, but popular throughout most of the decade were the gray or charcoal tight skirt, or full skirt with yards of crinoline underneath. Fashionable blouses, cashmere or lambs' wool sweaters worn backward with false angora collars were also popular. With angora socks, girls were seen in the always-in style white bucks and saddle oxfords which complemented the footwear of high school boys. Hair styles for girls reflected the boys, too, for the predominant style was the short duck tail or longer pony tail. To complete their appearance, girls wore red lipstick and a small amount of rouge and eye shadow. Formal or semiformal wear for both sexes resembled the "uniforms" of their parents—suits for boys and the chemise, sack, tube, or cocktail dress for girls.

**Slanguage** If teenagers' attitude and appearance reflected parental values and tastes during the 1950s, the teenagers' "slanguage" was an original part of their subculture. Although they could not be called

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critics, teenagers used phrases full of sarcasm. Frequently used in halls, locker rooms, dance auditoriums, and malt shops were Wanna knuckle sandwich? ... She's got a bad case of the uglies ... Suck gas ... Wanna lose 50 ugly pounds?—Cut off your head ... Go play on the freeway. "Friends" were called creeps, yo-yos, nerds, bananas, or weenies. Also part of the teenage lingo were Be coo/... Like wow ... Cool it ... Out to lunch ... A blast ... DDT (Drop dead twice) ... You dig?... Hang loose ... Wise up ... Goof off ... A drag ... Real George ... Have a ball ... Getting bombed ... Big deal ... Going ape ... Chicks ... Hoods ... Bad news ... Duhhhhhhhh! ... How's that grab you? ... No sweat ... Zits ... Forty lashes with a wet noodle ... Square, and hundreds more words to help teens articulate and communicate with their school peers.

**School activities** Most teens in high school were joiners and believers and most obeyed the school rules without question. Honor societies, social clubs, extracurricular activities, and popularity were goals for most teenagers, reflecting the values and examples they saw and heard at home. The school classroom itself was likely to be less of a participatory experience than it is today. Teachers were generally older, lectured frequently, and usually assigned textbook work as nightly homework. Classrooms were quiet, probably because teachers were respected and feared. Chronic absenteeism and tardiness to class were small problems to school administrators in the fifties. Once in school, students in many sections of the country were literally locked in from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

**Entertainment and leisure** Youth may not have a monopoly on fun in America, but they certainly have had their share of it. For fun most teens in the fifties relied on unplanned activities outside school. "Goofing off" or "messing around," teens by the millions "cruised" for hours around their towns in customized older cars such as '32 and '40 Fords, '49 Chevys, '50 Mercurys, and '55 Chevys (perhaps the car of the decade). A typical teenage boy spent a part of his day working on or admiring his "wheels" or chariot. Spending vast sums of money for fancy hubcaps, upholstery, paint jobs, and engine parts was almost an obsession during the decade. Seventy-five percent of all high school juniors nationally had driver's licenses!

Groups of harmless boys (sometimes including brave, giggling girls) stayed up late "bushwhacking" couples who were secretly parked on isolated streets or bluffs "making out," toilet-papering homes of boy and girl friends, sneaking two or three friends into drive-in theaters ("passion pits") by crowding them into trunks of cars, or phoning strangers who were not blessed with pleasant or plain names. When teenagers had parties, drugs, marijuana, and alcohol had no place in an evening of spin-the-bottle, Seven Minutes in Heaven, or soft-music romantic dancing. Out on the town, teens hung out at the local hamburger stands, drive-in restaurants, pizza parlors, and soda fountain

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drugstores, devouring pounds of greasy hamburgers, french fries, and the universal beverage Coke, which came in chocolate, cherry, and vanilla flavors (or “suicides”—a mixture of all flavors in a Coke syrup and carbonated water), foods almost guaranteeing a fretful case of “terminal” acne the next week.

**Conclusion** School in the fifties was a social experience. Beyond the basics of reading, writing, mathematics, and the rudiments of good citizenship, most teens and their parents believed (until the impact of Sputnik in 1957 changed the direction of American education) that the schools should produce well-adjusted, socially skilled, happy people, with less emphasis on intellectual attainment and individualism. Moderation and conformity were key components of the system. Teenagers of the fifties seemed to prefer to copy their parents’ dress, attitudes, values, even their tastes in entertainment and career aspirations. Few wanted to be the nonconformists, oddballs, or crusaders that many 1960s youths desired to be. As several national magazines pointed out in the mid-fifties, teenagers were part of the Silent Generation, or the Apathetic Generation. You can check the validity of this viewpoint by reading high school and college yearbooks of the fifties and by interviewing people who were teens in those years.

# INTERVIEWING AND RESEARCH TASKS - 1

**Introduction** Were 1950s' teenagers "crazy, mixed-up kids"? Is the label really valid? During this phase of the simulation, your task is to find out first hand what teenagers of that era were like.

## **Task 1: Interviewing a fifties teenager**

1. Find a person who was born between 1934 and 1943 (those dates would place the person in high school between 1950 and 1960).
2. Schedule an interview. Inform the interviewee that you're trying to find out what it was like being a teenager in the 1950s.
3. Write 20 questions or so that will elicit good, lengthy responses. (See the sample questions below.) Have these questions ready before the interview. During the interview, consider using a recorder to capture the personality and emotions of the interviewee.

### ***Sample questions***

- Would you please state your name, the high school you attended, where it was located, and the year you graduated?
- What three or four words come to your mind when you think of being a teenager in high school during the 1950s?
- What do you remember about your classes and teachers (favorites, personalities, teaching techniques, etc.)?
- Who were your idols during the fifties? Why?
- What do you remember about extracurricular activities in high school?
- What kind of music did you enjoy and listen to, and who were your favorite recording artists? Does the music of the fifties sound silly and nonsensical when you hear it today?
- How big a role did movies, movie stars, and TV play in your life as a teenager?
- What dreams in the fifties did you have about the future (i.e., marriage, children, career, nuclear disaster, etc.)?
- What was your relationship with people in authority (teachers, counselors, parents, etc.)?
- What clothing styles do you remember wearing in the 1950s? Describe your everyday school clothes.
- Were teenagers of the fifties as conformist as present-day observers say they were?
- In your honest opinion, were you aware of the major political events of the decade (elections, crises, wars, etc.)? If yes, what events do you remember?
- What major differences do you see between teenagers of today and teenagers of the 1950s?
- Was there one movie from the fifties which really affected you or the group you hung around with? Why?
- What do you remember about Presidents Truman and Eisenhower?

## INTERVIEWING AND RESEARCH TASKS - 2

- What dances do you remember from the fifties?
  - What were some of the views you had about the opposite sex when you were 16 or so? How have these views altered?
  - What kind of slang did you and your teenage friends use? Give some specific examples.
  - If you have attended a class reunion since graduation (10-, 15-, or 20-year reunion), what were the most noticeable changes in your classmates' appearance and attitudes?
  - Who was your favorite teacher? Why? Favorite subject? Why?
  - What were you like in high school? Label yourself a socie, normie or weirdo, innie or outie.
  - Did you have a nickname in high school? Was it important to have one?
  - Do you ever dream about high school? What are these dreams like?
  - Is there a triumphant moment you felt during high school you'd like to live over again? A worst moment?
  - Was there a position or office in high school to which you aspired? Why?
  - What was written under your pictures in your senior yearbook? Are you proud, embarrassed, angered about what was written?
  - If your graduating class held a reunion nearby this weekend, would you go? Why or why not?
  - How would you sum up your entire high school experience?
4. After the interview, write your interviewee's answers to the questions you asked. Then analyze your subject's responses and summarize his/her comments on the 1950s in a written page. Include generalizations you can make about teenage attitudes, clothing and fads, music and entertainment, high school, Language, etc.

### Task 2: Researching fifties yearbooks

1. Find a person who was a teenager in the fifties (the same one you interviewed?) and ask if you could borrow one or two of his/her yearbooks (sometimes called "annuals" in those years). As a researcher, try to locate at least two yearbooks, one from the early fifties and one from the late fifties. (You would also find it interesting to find yearbooks from different sections of the country and from several colleges.)
2. Carefully look through the yearbooks and write comments on the following items:
  - Who loaned you the yearbook.
  - Its title.
  - The high school and its location.

## INTERVIEWING AND RESEARCH TASKS - 3

- The yearbook's year and theme.
  - What most people wrote in the yearbook.
  - Overall appearance of teenagers.
  - School activities (dramas, dances, parades, clubs, etc.).
  - Teachers, coaches, counselors, etc.
  - Classes (subjects taught).
  - Hair styles (both sexes).
  - Sports (number, emphasis, one or both sexes?).
  - Girls' clothes and shoes.
  - Boys' clothes and shoes.
  - Major high school events.
  - Senior pictures.
  - Student government.
  - Advertising (usually in the back).
  - Senior wills (if included).
3. Having written comments on the above 18 items, now write several generalizations you can draw about teenage life in the 1950s from examining high school yearbooks.

### Task 3: Drawing conclusions

1. Using the information collected in the interview and the generalizations you drew from the yearbooks, write comments on the following (or discuss the following—teacher discretion):
- The accuracy of the memory of the interviewee.
  - The accuracy of your own previously held knowledge about teenagers of the fifties.
  - The accuracy of any films, TV shows, or other popular versions of teenage life.
  - How teenage life in the 1950s compares/contrasts with teenage life today.
  - The accuracy of what information you learned from the interview and yearbook search compared with the TEENAGERS handout you read at the beginning of this phase.

## TASK CARDS - 1

### TASK CARD

#### SOCIES/KISSIES

Plan the theme, then pick a band and site for the Spring Prom.

### TASK CARD

#### SOCIES/KISSIES

Write a victory yell for your school (Elmwood Eagles) football team.

### TASK CARD

#### SOCIES/KISSIES

Describe the “perfect” malt shop and the “perfect” meal eaten there.

### TASK CARD

#### SOCIES/KISSIES

Plan your week’s expenditures (you have a \$3 weekly allowance).

### TASK CARD

#### SOCIES/KISSIES

In a paragraph or two, tell your friends why the clean, white-bucked appearance and morality of Pat Boone is good for American teenagers.

### TASK CARD

#### SOCIES/KISSIES

In a paragraph, tell your civics class why a young man should be proud to go off to a foreign land like Korea to fight against communist aggression.

### TASK CARD

#### SOCIES/KISSIES

Write a composition for English on why we should support President Dwight Eisenhower and our nation in every situation.

### TASK CARD

#### SOCIES/KISSIES

Describe in favorable terms why going steady is not acceptable for proper social growth.

### TASK CARD

#### SOCIES/KISSIES

In a graduation speech, tell why you joined school clubs and sought a well-rounded education for yourself.

### TASK CARD

#### SOCIES/KISSIES

Plan the ideal “date.” Describe the person, where you’ll go, and what you’ll do. Also include what the evening will cost.

## TASK CARDS - 2

### TASK CARD

#### HOODS/WEIRDOS

Write (in barely legible handwriting) a description of the cherriest car imaginable.

### TASK CARD

#### HOODS/WEIRDOS

Defend rock and roll music to some concerned PTA members who visit your Senior Problems class.

### TASK CARD

#### HOODS/WEIRDOS

Write a love letter in “cool” language to your chick at nearby Coolidge High and discuss why school is such a drag.

### TASK CARD

#### HOODS/WEIRDOS

Describe to your friends why James Dean is your idol and *Rebel Without a Cause* your favorite flick.

### TASK CARD

#### HOODS/WEIRDOS

Describe in detail why your motorcycle club, The Cobras, was successful in last Friday night’s rumble with The Saints.

### TASK CARD

#### HOODS/WEIRDOS

Describe to your friends how you managed to sneak three buddies into the local “passion pit” and escaped detection from the security force.

### TASK CARD

#### HOODS/WEIRDOS

As a member of a panel, discuss in writing why you carry a switchblade knife and brass knuckles.

### TASK CARD

#### HOODS/WEIRDOS

Based on your teenage lifestyle of the 1950s, make some predictions about teenagers of the current decade.

### TASK CARD

#### HOODS/WEIRDOS

Give a “shrink” visiting your Senior Problems class reasons why you don’t join school clubs and conform to the style and behavior patterns of most teens.

### TASK CARD

#### HOODS/WEIRDOS

Write a short essay on why there should be a) freedom to smoke anywhere, including on campus; and b) an “open campus” at lunch time.

## TASK CARDS - 3

### TASK CARD

#### SOCIES/KISSIES

Plan the ideal “date.” Describe the person, where you’ll go, and what you’ll do. Also include what the evening will cost.

### TASK CARD

#### HOODS/WEIRDOS

Write the “perfect” forged pass to get back into U.S. history after ditching that class.

### TASK CARD

#### SOCIES/KISSIES

Tell your Senior Problems class why you think turning in a student for cheating on a math test is your responsibility as an upstanding person.

### TASK CARD

#### HOODS/WEIRDOS

As you look in the mirror, write down a physical description of yourself (apparel, grooming, features, etc.).

### TASK CARD

#### SOCIES/KISSIES

As you look in the mirror, write down a physical description of yourself (apparel, grooming, features, etc.).

### TASK CARD

#### HOODS/WEIRDOS

Plan the ideal “date.” Describe the person, where you’ll go, and what you’ll do. Also include what the evening will

### TASK CARD

#### SOCIES/KISSIES

Write an intelligent essay on the evils of tobacco and why smoking should be banned on campus, from school events, and from across the street.

### TASK CARD

#### HOODS/WEIRDOS

Plan a concerted Ditch Day from school at a local park. Plan the activities, food, and beverage.

### TASK CARD

#### SOCIES/KISSIES

Write down strategies for a campaign to elect a friend student body president. Use the issues of dress codes and hair styles. Include a slogan and a poster.

### TASK CARD

#### HOODS/WEIRDOS

Tell your Senior Problems class why cheating on tests should not be condemned if you are not caught because you’re really just sharing answers.

# FIFTIES DEBATE - 1

“There are only two parts to a speech. You make a statement and prove it.”—Aristotle, *Rhetoric*.

Debate can be a stimulating and exciting educational activity. Because of its competitive nature, it helps you think and reason more clearly. Moreover, it will train you to communicate more effectively in a variety of situations. Competitive debate starts with a properly worded proposition. For example, here is our proposition: *Resolved: The 1950s should make Americans hang their heads because of the decade's political apathy, international tension and crises, fear, cultural vacuum, ugly designed fashions, and outrageous songs and fads.* Those of you selected to debate this resolution are to imagine you are members of a senior Social Problems class (the class of 1959). In May 1959, your teacher asks you to debate this resolution a few weeks before you graduate.

**Affirmative** The affirmative team's job is to present facts to prove the proposal. The burden of proof falls on the affirmative's shoulders. Members of the affirmative team need to build a case with several reasons supporting the resolution. The affirmative always strives to make clear statements and then to support these statements with researched data and scholarly opinion.

**Negative** The negative side is faced with the burden of rejoinder. This team cannot win the debate unless it presents a well-developed argument that contradicts the affirmative. The negative has more freedom in attacking the proposal by using any strategy that will overcome the affirmative's attempt to meet its burden of proof. The negative team may choose to disprove the resolution by directly attacking the resolution's points one by one. Or the negative team may choose to present a counterattacking case that indirectly attacks the resolution. For example, in this debate the negative team may merely attack the affirmative's resolution or it may present a case defending the 1950s as a worthy decade.

**Research** It is extremely important for debaters to seek out and write down only the highest quality sources and evidence to support their arguments. Those who follow this cardinal rule will win their share of debates and learn a tremendous amount of information. A researcher must always be wary of his sources. How good (valid) is my source? he continually asks. Similarly he is wary of the evidence itself. How true (valid) is the information? he continually asks himself. Other questions to ask of the source and evidence: Is the source objective? Is it free from bias? Is the author an expert? Where did he/she get the information? How recent is the evidence? Is the evidence logical or emotional?

## FIFTIES DEBATE - 2

### Hints for successful debate:

- **Language** Use colorful language. Change voice inflection often. Speak simply and sharply: "Ladies and gentlemen, are we really to believe that..." Speak to individuals so that the audience knows you're not a computer full of facts. Use words such as these: "a further point," "another," "now let us turn to," "what does this mean?" "in conclusion," "in summary," "we have seen that," "these facts prove that," "therefore," "consequently," "hence," "these facts demonstrate that."
- **Delivery** Be aware of your posture, standing or sitting. If sitting, occasionally move your arms and legs. Strive to relax your limbs in a natural position. Avoid toying with objects. Establish eye contact and speak to individuals. Be enthusiastic, but avoid acting arrogant, smug, or apologetic. Speak clearly and stress (or repeat) key words. Pause between major points and avoid monotone.

**Rules** The rules you will follow will depend upon the length of time available for your debate. You may each get a certain number of minutes with affirmative and negative team members alternating. Or you may follow the traditional pattern:

- **Constructive Speeches**
  - Affirmative 1
  - Negative 1
  - Affirmative 2
  - Negative 2
- **Rebuttal Speeches** (half length of above)
  - Negative 1
  - Affirmative 1
  - Negative 2
  - Affirmative 2

# LEDGER SHEET

(For teacher—and possibly debater use)

## Good

1. Era of happy feelings (the good old days)
2. No major domestic crises
3. Racial harmony
4. No youth rebellion or wide generation gap
5. Happy, fun music
6. Good, clean movies
7. Popular leadership (Eisenhower and Nixon)
8. Patriotism very strong; most Americans supportive rather than critical of government
9. Beginning of rock and roll music with emphasis on love, not drugs or dissent
10. Teenagers lived in a golden age of irresponsibility; high school was fun (“There were plenty of problems in the world but nobody cared. All we worried about were cars, records, and who broke up with whom.”)
11. Highest standard of living in American history.
12. Most people well-dressed and cared about their appearance; certain standards of dress and behavior followed
13. Hollywood gave us several great films (*Bridge on the River Kwai*, *On the Waterfront*, *Marty*, *The Caine Mutiny*, *Ben-Hur*, *From Here To Eternity*)
14. The golden age of television, according to many critics
15. A unity of thought in America producing a happy, well-adjusted society with common goals

## Bad

1. Polio scares in early 1950s (the “summer crippler”)
2. Nuclear bomb scares and construction of ridiculous bomb shelters
3. Communist hysteria as a result of overzealous patriots
4. Pressure to conform to accepted conservative political beliefs
5. Complacency and apathy in politics and world affairs
6. Competitive arms race with the Soviet Union, costing billions of dollars
7. Deterioration of cities and urban neglect
8. Huge budgets allotted to build a national highway system (perhaps an unnecessary expense?)
9. Mediocrity in the arts (few really memorable films or books)
10. Conflict after conflict in the fifties (Korean War, Suez Crisis, Hungarian Revolt, Little Rock racial crisis, Lebanon invasion)
11. Awful music (simple-minded songs with primitive beat and silly, syrupy lyrics; non-talented idols rose overnight)
12. Pollution, overpopulation, and conservation ignored
13. Ugly fashions and styles dominant
14. TV in the fifties established the mediocre standards for today’s TV and developed the situation comedy format which plagues our screens today
15. People in the fifties had no freedom to speak out on political issues lest they be blacklisted or publicly scorned

# JUDGE'S EVALUATION FORM

Judge's name \_\_\_\_\_ Period \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Resolved:** *The 1950s should make Americans hang their heads because of the decade's political apathy, international tension and crises, fear, cultural vacuum, ugly designed fashions, and outrageous songs and fads.*

**Directions:** 1. Check each column at left: 1 = poor, 2 = fair, 3 = good, 4 = excellent, 5 = superior. 2. Total each speaker's points. 3. Write brief comments on each speaker's performance in the space at the right. 4. Follow directions at the bottom of this sheet.

<b>1st Aff.</b>	1	2	3	4	5	Debater: _____   Total points _____
Evidence						
Reasoning						
Refutation						
Delivery						

<b>1st Neg.</b>	1	2	3	4	5	Debater: _____   Total points _____
Evidence						
Reasoning						
Refutation						
Delivery						

<b>2nd Aff.</b>	1	2	3	4	5	Debater: _____   Total points _____
Evidence						
Reasoning						
Refutation						
Delivery						

<b>2nd Neg.</b>	1	2	3	4	5	Debater: _____   Total points _____
Evidence						
Reasoning						
Refutation						
Delivery						

<b>3rd Aff.</b>	1	2	3	4	5	Debater: _____   Total points _____
Evidence						
Reasoning						
Refutation						
Delivery						

<b>3rd Neg.</b>	1	2	3	4	5	Debater: _____   Total points _____
Evidence						
Reasoning						
Refutation						
Delivery						

Finally, on the back of this sheet copy and complete these statements: *In my opinion the better debating was done by the (negative/affirmative) side. Here are my reasons:*

# FIFTIES FINAL EXAM - 1

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Part 1: Debriefing section

1. Rate on the scale below your impression of FIFTIES as a learning experience. Place an "X" on the line below the label.

fabulous                  great                  cool                  so-so                  square                  awful                  world's worst

10                  9                  8                  7                  6                  5                  4                  3                  2                  1

2. What phase did you find most interesting and meaningful?

\_\_\_\_\_ Phase 1: The Big Events

\_\_\_\_\_ Phase 3: Mass Media Impact

\_\_\_\_\_ Phase 2: Lifestyle

\_\_\_\_\_ Phase 4: Krazy, Mixed-Up Kids

Describe why:

2. To what degree did FIFTIES change your pre-simulation views on the 1950?

\_\_\_\_\_ no change

\_\_\_\_\_ little change

\_\_\_\_\_ some more understanding

\_\_\_\_\_ considerably more understanding

Explain your response:

4. What changes would you make if you were to play this simulation next year?

5. Did actually taking roles and participating in activities people of the fifties were involved in help you to learn better than if more traditional techniques were used?

Explain:

# FIFTIES FINAL EXAM - 2

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Part 2: Examination

1. **Short essay** Describe briefly and state the significance of five of the seven names or terms below. (Three points each.)
  - James Dean
  - McCarthyism
  - Beatniks
  - Conformity
  - “Status points”
  - “The light that failed”
  - The Cold War
2. **Supporting a general statement** Make a general statement about the fifties and then support it with at least four factual statements. (15 points)  
GS:
  - A.
  - B.
  - C.
  - D.
3. **Essay** In a well-constructed essay, argue one side of a debate on the following statement:  
“Americans should be ashamed of their nation during the 1950s, years of national and international crises, weak leadership, silly music, ugly fashions, and mediocre standards in movies, TV, and general culture.” (30 points)

# PLANNING A NIFTY FIFTIES DANCE

Very possibly the most memorable activity you do in FIFTIES will be planning and holding a Nifty Fifties Dance. You may find it a profitable or charitable project for your class, and if you want to expand it, you can involve the entire school. Planning a dance of this nature requires hard work. Here are suggestions.

**Band/music** Either contact a local booking agent for a fifties band or borrow/buy several record albums including the incomparable film score from *American Graffiti*, or any of the albums under the title *Oldies But Goodies*.

**Decorations** Try to work toward a sock hop realism with crepe paper streamers, blown-up posters of Elvis Presley, James Dean, or Howdy Doody. A blank 8- to 10-foot graffiti board with attached marking pens conveniently placed at the entrance of the dance will arouse interest before the music starts and will add to the overall festivities.

**Refreshments** Contact a local Coca Cola or Pepsi distributor. Ask if they have any old signs from the 1950s while you're inquiring about ordering the Coke syrups, CO<sub>2</sub> cartridges (7-10 cartridges for 300-400 people) and pre-mix containers. Try to obtain cherry-, chocolate-, vanilla-, and lime-flavored syrups to make the drinks (especially "suicides," a combination of all flavors in a Coke base). From the author's experience, the distributor will only charge what you use and will take back any unused syrup cans, containers, and cartridges. To add more reality and involve more students, have table service by waitresses on roller skates. Also, if you can afford it, charge only a nickel for a Coke. If not, go to 15 cents-25 cents. Serving food is optional.

**Pictures/photography** Lure the best student photographers to the dance to make the evening more memorable for those who attend. Have two separate setups with 1950s memorabilia as back drops—a '55 Chevy, juke box, motorcycle, etc. If no adequate student photographer is available, call a local professional to take pictures using these ideas. In either case, you should probably use black-and-white film to capture the "real fifties."

**Promotion** Be creative in advertising the dance. Make small and giant posters using slang from the period. Play 1950s music all week previous to the dance on the school's intercom system during announcements, snack break, and lunch. Get school authorities to okay a Nifty Fifties Week, during which you can organize and carry out at lunch time a Cherry Car contest, a VW "stuff" or "cram" contest, or a best-dressed Hood and Chick contest. Small trophies, plaques, or record albums could be awarded.

**Miscellaneous** The dance itself should fulfill the dreams of the guests. You might give away record albums of 1950's music as door prizes and to the winners of a "Mr. and Miss Teen Angel" contest (chosen by applause and judges). In the course of the dance, schedule the Bunny Hop several times to have the entire group pull together (if a record, speed it up gradually if you can). A Dick Clark disc jockey or emcee could be used to walk through the dancers with a hand microphone to ask for "dedications" ("This one is for Sheila from Mike of the Lords' Motorcycle Club") and to ask about the previous tune, to which the dancers might say: "I liked the beat, but the words were hard to understand—I give it a 74!"



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# RELEASE FORM FOR PHOTOGRAPHIC IMAGES

## ***To Teachers:***

To help illustrate to others the experiential activities involved and to promote the use of simulations, we like to get photographs and videos of classes participating in the simulation. Please send photos of students actively engaged so we can publish them in our promotional material. Be aware that we can only use images of students for whom a release form has been submitted.

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# STUDENT GUIDE

# FIFTIES

**A simulation of the events, personalities, lifestyles, and culture of the 1950s**

*The 1950s!* Those years flash indelible memories across the minds of Americans who stumbled through adolescence then. A historical gap almost a half century ago is really not too soon to assess the impact of that era on all of us today. During this simulation you will form opinions about personalities, events, trends, and even the fifties' teenagers. Let yourself go and you will experience what life *was* like in the 1950s. You will follow the ancient words of wisdom in this Chinese proverb: *I hear, and I forget. I see, and I remember. I do, and I understand.*

**Introduction and Phase 1: The Big Events** An overview essay introduces you to this all important post-World War II era and its personalities and trends (Sinatra, *Oklahoma*, jalopies, containment, Milton Berle...). You form groups and write journalistic historical summaries of 12 major events of the fifties, news stories not always so fondly remembered today. The articles are combined to form a classroom historical newspaper, which is used as a foundation of facts for future reference. During this segment, newsflashes report the lighter side of the decade. You hear about *I Love Lucy*, sleepwalking, fixed quiz shows, Ben Hogan, Hopalong Cassidy, Ike, panty raids, 3-D movies, and hula hoops. An analysis of Senator Joseph McCarthy and his influence ends Phase 1.

**Phase 2: Lifestyle** Beginning with a list of FACTS OF THE FIFTIES (the Bible led the bestselling list for 1952, 1953, and 1954), you make generalizations about the decade. Then, you get the "feel" for those years by a sequence of activities: reworking dialogue for *Peanuts* cartoon strips; surveying people on conformity; composing Beatnik poetry, perhaps to be recited amidst the simulated trapping of a dark, 1958 coffee house; writing jokes similar to the zingers the great Mort Sahl used as a stand-up satirist; drawing the ever-popular *Doodles* and making rubber-Doodle faces. As a finale to Phase 2, you gather in a family of four to plan an ideal fifties weekend. Sounds real George, huh?

**Phase 3: Mass Media Impact** Most conventional textbooks fail to include cultural history. In this phase, you first read an overview on movies, TV, and pop records of the fifties and then join Cultural Committees. In these committees, you write, then perform scenes for some of the most popular TV shows of the 1950s: *What's My Line?*, *Ozzie and Harriet*, and *Dragnet*. One committee silently acts out one of the decade's most influential movies, *Rebel Without a Cause*, starring the magnetic, moody superstar James Dean, while a narrator dramatically tells the *Rebel* story of mixed-up teenagers involved in identity problems and tragedy. Another committee shares the responsibilities of composing pop tunes of the fifties and



then “sweating out” the debut of their songs as they are judged a “hit” or a “miss” by a celebrity panel on a *Juke Box Jury* TV show.

**Phase 4: Krazy, Mixed-Up Kids** Perhaps the “dessert” of the simulation is this last phase, because in it you do various activities to better understand teenagers of the 1950s. After reading an overview, you research high school and college yearbooks, interview people who were teenagers in the 1950s, and then complete TEENAGE TASK CARDS (e.g., “Write a paragraph telling your Senior Problems class why the neat and clean image of Pat Boone is good for American teenagers.”). You complete such tasks as members of one of two groups: *Socies/Kissies* or *Hoods/Weirdos*. As a result of these activities, each of you will have evaluated what teenagers were like then; you will better understand the minds of parents and friends who made up the student bodies of high schools all over the country. You will appreciate how some of them were under great pressure to gain and hold “status points” in a way similar to high school society today. A debate on the merits of the 1950s ends this phase; debaters will imagine they are members of a 1959 Senior Problems class.

**Debriefing and examination** In a final debriefing you evaluate the simulation’s strong and weak points. Before the final exam, each of you

makes a ledger sheet on the fifties (“good” and “bad” sides). This ledger helps you review facts and interpretations of the era. A comprehensive examination ends the simulation.

**Brownie Points** The length of FIFTIES requires more accountability than many simulations. You must keep abreast of your progress and points on a BROWNIE POINTS BALANCE SHEET. (In the 1950s, “brownie points” referred to favorable words or grades granted to students who did the work they were told to do—like Brownies, the pre-Girl Scout set.) Your teacher awards points often, and he/she closely watches your accuracy and progress throughout the simulation. You also receive points for bringing in artifacts (memorabilia) on a designated day set aside for that purpose.

**Special events** *Nifty Fifties Dance* The most important event of your participation in FIFTIES may turn out to be the planning and execution of a Nifty Fifties dance, which could expand to include the entire school. You could serve on committees like Band/Music Committee, Decorations Committee, Refreshments Committee, Pictures/Photography Committee, or Promotional Committee. The dance could have extras in it to make all your efforts successful: A Dick Clark-type emcee, Mr. and Miss Teen Angel Contests, and a bopping or jitterbug dance contest. Your teacher will supply more information if the dance is on your list of activities.

In any event, don’t hang back. Participate! As one who knew the 1950s intimately put it: “If you don’t play it cool, nerd, you can drop dead twice. You’re a real drag, creep, and your buddies are out to lunch. You dig?”

