

## AP US History Document Based Question

The following question requires you to use both the documents and outside information.

**To what extent did the decade of the 1950s deserve its reputation as an age of political, social and cultural conformity?**

### Document A

“How far have we come in man's long pilgrimage from darkness toward light? Are we nearing the light—a day of freedom and of peace for all mankind? Or are the shadows of another night closing in upon us?....

Yet the promise of this life is imperiled by the very genius that has made it possible. Nations amass wealth. Labor sweats to create, and turns out devices to level not only mountains but also cities. Science seems ready to confer upon us, as its final gift, the power to erase human life from this planet....

“We must be willing, individually and as a Nation, to accept whatever sacrifices may be required of us. A people that values in privileges above its principles soon loses both.

These basic precepts are not lofty abstractions, far removed from matters of daily living. They are laws of spiritual strength that generate and define our material strength. Patriotism means equipped forces and a prepared citizenry. Moral stamina means more energy and more productivity, on the farm and in the factory. Love of liberty means the guarding of every resource that makes freedom possible, from the sanctity of our families and the wealth of our soil to the genius of our scientists.

And so each citizen plays an indispensable role. The productivity of our heads, our hands, and our hearts is the source of all the strength we can command, for both the enrichment of our lives and the winning of the peace.”

President Eisenhower's First Inaugural Address, 1953

### Document B

Moloch—whose mind is pure machinery!

Moloch—whose blood is running money!

Moloch—whose fingers are ten armies!

Moloch—whose heart is a cannibal dynamo!

Moloch—whose love is endless oil and stone!

Moloch—whose soul is electricity and banks!

\*Moloch = the god of materialism and conventionality.

Allan Ginsberg's "Howl", 1956

## Document C



## Document

D

"We conclude that in the field of public education the doctrine of "separate but equal" has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal. Therefore, we hold that the plaintiffs and others similarly situated for whom the actions have been brought are, by reason of the segregation complained of, deprived of the equal protection of the laws guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment. This disposition makes unnecessary any discussion whether such segregation also violates the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment."

Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas, 1954

## Document E

"To strengthen the national defense and to encourage and assist in the expansion and improvement of educational programs to meet critical national needs; and for other purposes. Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That this Act, divided into titles and sections according to the following table of contents, may be cited as the "National Defense Education Act of 1958".

Sec. 101. .... We must increase our efforts to identify and educate more of the talent of our Nation. This requires programs that will give assurance that no student of ability will be denied an opportunity for higher education because of financial need; will correct as rapidly as possible the existing imbalances in our educational programs which have led to an insufficient proportion of our population educated in science, mathematics, and modern foreign languages and trained in technology.

The Congress reaffirms the principle and declares that the States and local communities have and must retain control over and primary responsibility for public education. The national interest requires, however, that the Federal Government give assistance to education for programs which are important to our defense.... It is therefore the purpose of this Act to provide substantial assistance in various forms to individuals, and to States and their subdivisions, in order to insure trained manpower of sufficient quality and quantity to meet the national defense needs of the United States."

National Defense Education Act of 1958.

## Document F

"AN ACT To provide for the reporting and disclosure of certain financial transactions and administrative practices of labor organizations and employers, to prevent abuses in the administration of trusteeships by labor organizations, to provide standards with respect to the election of officers of labor organizations, and for other purposes....

Sec. 2. (a) The Congress finds that, in the public interest, it continues to be the responsibility of the Federal Government to protect employees' rights to organize, choose their own representatives, bargain collectively, and otherwise engage in concerted activities for their mutual aid or protection; that the relations between employers and labor organizations and the millions of workers they represent have a substantial impact on the commerce of the Nation; and that in order to accomplish to objective of a free flow of commerce it is essential that labor organizations, employers, and

their officials adhere to the highest standards of responsibility and ethical conduct in administering the affairs of their organizations, particularly as they affect labor-management relations.”

Landrum-Griffin Act of 1959

### **Document G**

“All history can show no more portentous economic phenomenon than today's American market. It is colossal, soaking up half the world's steel and oil, and three-fourths of its cars and appliances. The whole world fears it and is baffled by it. Let U.S. industry slip 5 per cent, and waves of apprehension sweep through foreign chancelleries. Let U.S. consumer spending lag even half as much, and the most eminent economists anxiously read the omens. The whole world also marvels at and envies this market. It is enabling Americans to raise their standard of living every year while other countries have trouble in maintaining theirs. And of course the whole world wants to get in on it. For it still can punish the incompetent and inefficient, and still reward handsomely the skillful, efficient, and daring....

The most important change of the past few years, by all odds, is the rise of the great mass into a new moneyed middle class, a rapidly growing market that seems bound, sooner or later, to become the American market. It is like no other middle class in history, either abroad or at home.”

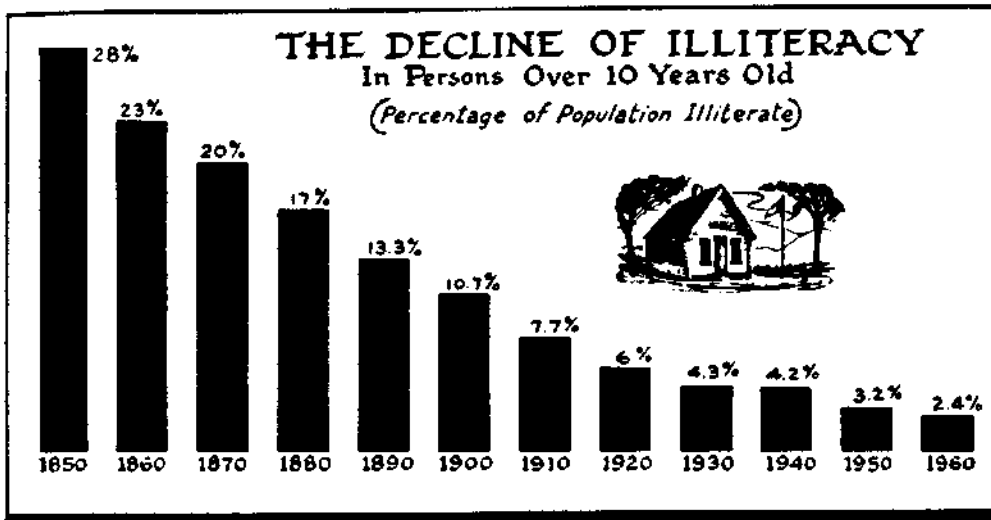
From the editors of Fortune, "The Changing American Market" 1955

Document H



"Caught him trespassin' on private property"

Document I



Document J

Little boxes on the hillside, little boxes made of ticky tacky,  
Little boxes on the hillside, little boxes all the same.  
There's a green one and a pink one and a blue one and a yellow one,  
And they're all made out of ticky tacky and they all look just the same.

Words and music by Malvina Reynolds, 1962

## Document K

"The suburban housewife, she was the dream image of the young American women and the envy, it was said, of women all over the world. The American housewife, freed by science and laborsaving appliances from the drudgery, the dangers of childbirth and the illnesses of her grandmother. She was healthy, beautiful, educated, concerned only about her husband, her children, her home. She had found true feminine fulfillment. As a housewife and mother, she was respected as a full and equal partner to man in his world. She was free to choose automobiles, clothes, appliances, supermarkets; she had everything that women ever dreamed of.

In the fifteen years after World War II, this mystique of feminine fulfillment became the cherished and self-perpetuating core of contemporary American culture. Millions of women lived their lives in the image of those pretty pictures of the American suburban housewife.... Their only dream was to be perfect wives and mothers; their highest ambition to have five children and a beautiful house, their only fight to get and keep their husbands. They had no thought for the unfeminine problem."

The Feminine Mystique, Betty Friedan

## Document L

"This book is about the organization man. If the term is vague, it is because I can think of no other way to describe the people I am talking about. They are not the workers, nor are they the white-collar people in the usual, clerk sense of the word. These people only work for The Organization. The ones I am talking about belong to it as well. They are the ones of our middle class who have left home, spiritually as well as physically, to take the vows of organization life, and it is they who are the mind and soul of our great self-perpetuating institutions. Only a few are top managers or ever will be. In a system that makes such hazy terminology as "junior executive" psychologically necessary, they are of the staff as much as the line, and most are destined to live poised in a middle area that still awaits a satisfactory euphemism. But they are the dominant members of our society nonetheless. They have not joined together into a recognizable elite, our country does not stand still long enough for that, but it is from their ranks that are coming most of the first and second echelons of our leadership, and it is their values which will set the American temper."

William Allen Whyte Jr., The Organization Man

## Document M

I drive my car to supermarket/ The way I take is superhigh / A superlot is where I park it / And Super Suds are what I buy. / Supersalemen sell me tonic / Super-Tone O, for relief. / The planes I ride are supersonic. / In trains I like the Super Chief. / Supercilious men and women / call me superficial, me! / Who so superbly learned to swim in / supercolossality. / Superphosphate-fed foods feed me / Superservice keeps me new. / Who would dare to supercede me / Super-super-superwho?

John Updike, 1954

## Document N

This conjunction of an immense military establishment and a large arms industry is new in the American experience....

In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist....

Akin to, and largely responsible for the sweeping changes in our industrial-military posture, has been the technological revolution during recent decades. In this revolution, research has become central; it also becomes more formalized, complex, and costly. A steadily increasing share is conducted for, by, or at the direction of, the Federal government.

Today, the solitary inventor, tinkering in his shop, has been overshadowed by task forces of scientists in laboratories and testing fields. In the same fashion, the free university, historically the fountainhead of free ideas and scientific discovery, has experienced a revolution in the conduct of research. Partly because of the huge costs involved, a government contract becomes virtually a substitute for intellectual curiosity. For every old blackboard there are now hundreds of new electronic computers.

President Eisenhower's Farewell Speech, 1961