

SSUSH21 The student will explain economic growth and its impact on the United States, 1945-1970.



Levittown, NY: Before and After

a. Describe the baby boom and its impact as shown by Levittown and the Interstate Highway Act.

- The “baby boom” was the period of time after World War II when the U.S. experienced a massive increase in the child birth rate (*from 1945-1961, 65 million children were born*)



Interstate Highway Act (1956)

- President Eisenhower saw the need for a more efficient highway system, to move people, goods, and military equipment across the country quickly.
 - The Act which would eventually build over 40,000 miles of interstate highway spurred enormous economic growth through:
-car sales, chain restaurants and hotels, and the ability of workers to move further away from the cities.
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Levittown

- Levittown, 10 miles from NYC, was one of the first suburbs built in the U.S.
- Suburbs grew quickly after WWII because of the baby boom (large families), and the new benefits for buying homes provided by the government to former soldiers.



b. Describe the impact television has had on American culture; include the presidential debates (Kennedy/Nixon, 1960) and news coverage of the Civil Rights Movement.

- The first televised presidential debate occurred in 1960 between Vice-President Richard Nixon and John F. Kennedy.



Nixon/Kennedy Debate (1960)

- Nixon, who had been in the hospital for two weeks, had lost 20 pounds and looked tired.
- Because of television, many Americans were able to see the candidates in action for the first time, which helped Kennedy win the election.



Television and the Civil Rights Movement

- Television brought the plight of African Americans into the homes of many Americans and helped to change public opinion towards the Civil Right movement.
 - In 1963, after viewing the violence in Birmingham, AL on television, President Kennedy began working on a new civil rights bill.
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c. Analyze the impact of technology on American life; include the development of the personal computer and the cellular telephone.

- The development of the personal computer and cell phone allowed Americans to access and transmit information at will



d. Describe the impact of competition with the USSR as evidenced by the launch of Sputnik I and President Eisenhower's actions.

- The Cold War competition between the U.S. and the Soviet Union led to the “Space Race”.
 - Though the U.S. built intercontinental missiles capable of delivering nuclear warheads anywhere in the world, Americans were shocked when the Soviet Union was able to send a satellite, Sputnik I, into orbit in 1957.
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Reaction to Sputnik

- Though at first President Eisenhower dismissed the feat, the U.S. created the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and passed the National Defense Education Act which provided money for science and math education

