

Chapter 20

The Postwar Years at Home (1945–1960)

The Mood of the 1950s

PRENTICE HALL

Chapter 20, Section 2

- **Why were comfort and security so important to Americans in the 1950s?**
- **What were the accepted roles of men and women during the 1950s?**
- **How did some people challenge conformity during the 1950s?**



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Comfort and Security

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- **Enjoying prosperity and recovering from war and economic depression, most Americans in the 1950s valued security over adventure.**
- **Youth in the 1950s enjoyed more time for school, and for recreation, than youth in earlier generations.**
- **Businesses marketed products such as movies and magazines to youths, reinforcing images of what it meant to be a teenager.**
- **Partially in response to the threats of communism and nuclear war, many Americans renewed their interest in religion. References to God were added to the Pledge of Allegiance and imprinted on U.S. currency.**



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Men's and Women's Roles

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Chapter 20, Section 2

- **Men and women were expected to play strictly defined roles in the 1950s. While men were expected to hold jobs and support their families, women were expected to perform domestic duties.**
- **Nevertheless, more and more married women began working outside the home, some to support their families and others for the sense of satisfaction they derived from holding jobs.**
- **Some women, notably Betty Friedan, desired more freedom in choosing social roles than the 1950s cultural climate allowed.**



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Youthful Rebellions

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Rock-and-Roll

- **Rock-and-roll**, a style of music based on black rhythm and blues, became popular among teenagers in the 1950s.
- Many adults disliked rock-and-roll music, claiming that it encouraged immorality.
- Popular with both black and white teenagers, rock-and-roll threatened those who were comfortable with racial segregation.

Beatniks

- **Beatniks**, many of whom were artists and writers, launched a movement that stressed spontaneity and rejected money and power.
- Beatniks shocked many Americans with their open sexuality and use of illegal drugs.
- Author Jack Kerouac embodied the Beatnik spirit for many Americans.



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The Mood of the 1950s—Assessment

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Which of these trends was a reason for the resurgence in religion during the 1950s?

- (A) Increasing popularity of rock-and-roll music**
- (B) Rise of media targeted at teenagers**
- (C) Fear of nuclear war**
- (D) Frustration with traditional women's roles**

Why did many adults oppose rock-and-roll music?

- (A) They did not have the money to buy records.**
- (B) They felt it encouraged immorality.**
- (C) They disliked the philosophy of the Beatniks.**
- (D) They preferred music with more complicated melodies.**

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