Distance Learning Assignments: World And U.S.

Each week, there will be a reading assignment from your textbook. For each assignment, you will need to read the assigned pages AND:

1. Write a 5+ sentence summary in your own words of the material covered in the reading.

2. Include 2 vocabulary definitions from the reading. The definitions should be in your own words.

3. You will need to email me at dalmasc@luhsd.net your summary and vocabulary. (both should be in the same email.)
BE SURE TO INCLUDE IN YOUR EMAIL YOUR FULL NAME (First and last) AND Period AND THE TITLE OF THE READING ASSIGNMENT. (for example, US Reading Assigment Week One)

You can email throughout each week day (Monday through Friday) 8:15 a.m. - 3:00p.m. if you have any questions.
Email: dalmasc@luhsd.net

Week One: April 6th. Due by 11:59p.m. Friday April 10.

Old World History Book, Copyright 2013: pp, 357, 358, 361

New World History Book, Copyright 2020: pp 418, 419, 424

US History: pp 458-463, 472-479

1. Searching for Communists on the Home Front

In 1951, the federal government published a pamphlet listing 100 questions and answers about communism in the United States. Examples include:

> *What is communism?*
> A system by which one small group seeks to rule the world.
>
> *What do communists want?*
> To rule your mind and your body from cradle to grave.
>
> *Where can a communist be found in everyday life?*
> Look for him in your school, your labor union, your church, or your civic club.
>
> —"100 Things You Should Know About Communism in the U.S.A.," 1951

The House Un-American Activities Committee held thousands of hearings in its hunt for subversives in American society. Here the committee questions a Hollywood executive about alleged communist influence in the film industry.

This publication revealed that the United States fought the Cold War not only against communists in foreign countries—it also fought communism at home.

Communists Come Under Suspicion at Home Not all Americans agreed with the government's definition of communism. Some people believed communism offered a much fairer organization of society than capitalism did. Under a communist system, everyone would share equally in what society produced, and the extreme disparity between wealth and poverty would dissolve. Supporters maintained that this would significantly increase human happiness.

This utopian vision attracted many American supporters during the Depression. Some of these followers joined the Communist Party outright, while others became **communist sympathizers**, or people who believed in communist ideology but did not join the party. Even though Communist Party membership in the United States was just 43,000 in 1950, the building Cold War incited greater fears of communist **subversion**, or plots to overthrow the U.S. government and establish a communist dictatorship.

To calm public anxiety, President Truman established the Federal Employee Loyalty Program in 1947. It required government employers to take **loyalty oaths**, or pledges of loyalty to the United States, as well as background investigations of employees with possible connections to subversive groups. In 5 million investigations, hundreds of government workers lost their jobs for being "potentially" disloyal, while several thousand others were forced to resign.

HUAC Hunts for Communists in Hollywood and Beyond Meanwhile, Congress began its own investigation, led by the **House Un-American Activities Committee** (HUAC), which was formed in 1938 to investigate subversive organizations. In 1947, HUAC shifted its focus to communist influence in the film industry. "Large numbers of moving pictures that come out of Hollywood," charged one committee member, "carry the Communist line." The committee called on writers, actors, and directors to testify about their political beliefs.

Ten of these witnesses refused to answer the committee's questions. Called the Hollywood Ten, they argued that the Fifth Amendment afforded them the right to refuse to testify because their testimony might **incriminate** them, or make them seem guilty. The committee disagreed, charging them with **contempt of Congress**, or willful failure to obey the authority of Congress. When the House of Representatives voted to convict the Hollywood Ten of said crime, the group issued a joint statement that warned, "The United States can keep its constitutional liberties, or it can keep the [HUAC]. It can't keep both."

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Heads of Hollywood movie studios became concerned about the impact of the HUAC investigation on their industry. Therefore, they pledged not to hire anyone with communist sympathies, creating a **blacklist** of people thought to be Communist Party members or communist sympathizers. Anyone whose name appeared on this blacklist could no longer find work in the film industry.

After interrogating the film industry, HUAC moved to other groups. In 1954, it called on labor organizer John Watkins to testify about communist influence in labor unions. When Watkins refused to answer certain questions, HUAC convicted him of contempt of Congress. Watkins appealed his conviction, arguing that the Constitution does not grant Congress unlimited power to investigate the private lives of citizens, to which the Supreme Court agreed. Writing for the majority, Chief Justice Earl Warren ruled that Congress's power to investigate must be related to its business of making laws:

> There is no general authority to expose the private affairs of individuals without justification in terms of the functions of the Congress . . . Investigations conducted solely for the personal aggrandizement [glorification] of the investigators or to "punish" those investigated are indefensible.
>
> —*Watkins v. United States*, 1957

Spy Cases Raise New Fears Public fears about subversion deepened when Americans in important government positions were charged with working as spies for the Soviet Union. The **Alger Hiss case** involved a State Department official who had served as an adviser to President Roosevelt at the Yalta Conference. A former Communist named Whittaker Chambers accused Hiss of forwarding secrets to the Soviet Union. In 1950, a federal grand jury convicted Hiss of **perjury**, or lying under oath. Hiss maintained his innocence, but secret documents made public in 1995 indicate that Hiss probably had spied for the Soviet Union.

Ethel and Julius Rosenberg were tried, convicted, and executed on charges of forwarding atomic secrets to the Soviet Union. Such highly publicized spy cases increased public fear that the federal government was riddled with traitors. Soviet documents released in the 1990s indicate that Julius had spied for the Soviet Union, while Ethel was most likely guilty only of keeping quiet about her husband's activities.

Similarly shocking were claims of Americans helping the Soviet Union test its first atomic bomb in 1949. A year later, a German-born British physicist named Klaus Fuchs confessed that he had spied for the Soviet Union while working on the Manhattan Project for Britain during World War II. The information Fuchs passed along to Soviet scientists may have helped accelerate their atomic weapons development. From Fuchs, a trail of espionage led investigators to Ethel and Julius Rosenberg, whom the United States charged with passing atomic secrets to the Soviet Union. The ensuing **Rosenberg trial** resulted in death sentences for both defendants. At the time, many people protested the verdict and sentences, arguing that the evidence against the suspects was inconclusive. Nonetheless, in 1953 the Rosenbergs were executed—the only American civilians to be killed for spying during the Cold War.

The Rise and Fall of Joseph McCarthy About two weeks after Fuchs confessed to spying, Senator Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin addressed a West Virginia audience, asking how communists had been so successful in overrunning Eastern Europe and China. He declared that the answer could be found in "the traitorous actions" of Americans working in high government posts, adding, "I have here in my hand a list of 205 . . . names that were made known to the Secretary of State as being members of the Communist Party and who nevertheless are still working and shaping policy in the State Department."

McCarthy never produced this list of names, nor did he offer any evidence to support his accusations. Still, he launched a crusade against subversives that rapidly gained momentum. After widespread public support for his investigations helped the Republican Party win control of the Senate in 1952, McCarthy was named head of the Government Committee on Operations of the Senate.

Over the next two years, McCarthy used his newfound power to search for subversives. Although he never amassed a solid case against anyone, McCarthy's accusations still drove some people out of their jobs. For example, under hostile interrogation by McCarthy's chief lawyer, Roy Cohn, Army Signal Corps employee Carl Greenblum broke down and began to cry. As Greenblum collected himself, McCarthy announced, "the witness admits he was lying." Greenblum had not admitted guilt, in fact, but was still fired. This reckless persecution of innocent people became known as **McCarthyism**. Today, this term signifies the practice of publicly accusing someone of subversive activities without evidence to support the charges.

McCarthyism increased public fear. Lawmakers refused to enact reforms that might be interpreted as supporting communism. Schools asked teachers to sign loyalty oaths, and those who objected were fired. Citizens became reluctant to speak out against injustices for fear of being labeled subversive. This anxiety often became extreme. When a university's graduate students circulated a petition requesting a vending machine in the physics department, some students refused to sign, fearing their names appearing on a list with allegedly radical students.

McCarthy finally overstepped. In 1954, he accused both the Army and President Dwight D. Eisenhower of being "soft on Communism." During the nationally televised Army-McCarthy hearings, spellbound Americans watched as McCarthy's reckless tactics were exposed. The climax of the hearings occurred when McCarthy attacked a young man who worked for Joseph Welch, the lawyer representing the Army. An emotional Welch responded,

> Little did I dream you could be so reckless and so cruel as to do an injury to that lad. It is, I regret to say, equally true that I fear he shall always bear a scar needlessly inflicted by you. If it were in my power to forgive you for your reckless cruelty, I would do so. I like to think I'm a gentle man, but your forgiveness will have to come from someone other than me.
>
> —Joseph Welch, addressing Senator Joseph McCarthy, June 9, 1954

The more outlandish Senator McCarthy's accusations grew, the less believable they became. When McCarthy made false charges against a young lawyer working for Joseph Welch during the Army-McCarthy hearings, a disgusted Welch replied, "Have you no sense of decency, sir, at long last? Have you left no sense of decency?" Negative public sentiment and Congressional action worked to discredit and erase McCarthy from American politics.

Public opinion quickly turned against McCarthy. Late in 1954, the Senate passed Resolution 301, which **censured**, or formally scolded, McCarthy for his destructive actions. His behavior, it stated, had "tended to bring the Senate into dishonor and disrepute." McCarthy soon faded from the national scene.

2. Living with Nuclear Anxiety

> A stark white flash enveloped their world. Randy felt the heat on his neck. Peyton cried out and covered her face with her hands. In the southwest, in the direction of Tampa, St. Petersburg, and Sarasota, another unnatural sun was born, much larger and infinitely fiercer than the sun in the east . . . Peyton screamed, "I can't see! I can't see, Mommy. Mommy, where are you?"
>
> —Pat Frank, *Alas, Babylon*, 1959

Like many novels written in the 1950s, Pat Frank's *Alas, Babylon*, portrayed a world engulfed by World War III—an imagined conflict fought with weapons capable of destroying all life on Earth.

The Perils and Promise of the Atomic Age Books like *Alas, Babylon* explored the perils of the Atomic Age. During these early Cold War years, Americans easily recalled the catastrophic destruction caused by the atomic bombs dropped on Japan. People were terrified to consider these bombs destroying American cities—yet by 1949, such attacks seemed plausible.

The Atomic Age generated public excitement in addition to fear. In 1946, a cereal company offered children an "atomic bomb" ring for the price of 15 cents and a cereal box top. "See real atoms split to smithereens!" the advertisement gleefully claimed. About 750,000 children ordered the ring.

Despite these fears, possessing atomic power also excited Americans. The media published glowing stories predicting atomic-powered cars, ships, airplanes, and power plants. One newspaper reported,

> Atoms in an amount of matter spread out the size of a fingernail, say the scientists, could supply sufficient energy to propel an ocean liner across the sea and back. An automobile, with a microscopic amount of matter from which atomic energy could be released, could be driven around for a lifetime if it didn't wear out, never stopping at a gas station.
>
> —*Milwaukee Journal*, August 7, 1945

Businesses soon jumped on the atomic bandwagon. The Washington Press Club's bar marked the arrival of the Atomic Age with the "Atomic Cocktail." Department stores advertised "Atomic Sales." Musicians recorded songs with titles like "Atom Buster" and "Atom Polka." A French fashion designer named his new two-piece bathing suit the "bikini" in honor of the atomic bomb testing on Bikini Atoll in the Central Pacific.

Atomic bomb tests moved to the Nevada desert in the 1950s. In Las Vegas, the Chamber of Commerce promoted atomic tourism, publishing a schedule of tests and advantageous places to view them from. Armed with "atomic box lunches," tourists hoping to witness an atomic bomb's power flocked as close to ground zero—the point of a bomb's impact—as the government allowed.

Creating a Civil Defense System As the atomic arms race gained momentum, the federal government began planning for **civil defense**—the organization and training of citizens to work with the armed forces and emergency services during a war or natural disaster. In 1951, Congress established the **Federal Civil Defense Administration** (FCDA). The head of FCDA warned Americans that their "back yard may be the next front line," and distributed millions of civil defense manuals to help people prepare for a nuclear attack. These publications revealed that Americans would not be able to rely on the military to protect them from a surprise attack—instead, people would have to prepare to protect themselves as best they could.

Schools screened a civil defense film called *Duck and Cover* to teach children how to respond to a nuclear attack. This film features a character named Bert the Turtle, who demonstrates hiding in his shell to protect against a dynamite blast. The film uses Bert's situation to illustrate how children should react to an atomic bomb explosion, similarly by ducking and covering.

Civil defense preparedness was soon integrated into daily life. Many communities set up bomb shelters in public buildings. Stocked with emergency food and water supplies, these shelters would offer refuge during an attack. Weekly warning sirens and emergency radio station tests were conducted across the country. Civil defense workers called block wardens trained their neighbors on how to fight fires and provide first aid following an attack.

Children also participated in civil defense training. The FCDA developed a film and corresponding booklet featuring a character called Bert the Turtle, who taught children how to protect themselves during an atomic explosion. Bert demonstrated duck-and-cover drills to prepare children for hearing an emergency siren.

Some families furthered their preparedness by constructing an underground shelter in their backyard. Several companies sold prefabricated "fallout shelters" for single-family use, which were designed to shield families not only from an atomic explosion, but also from the resulting radioactive dust that "falls out" of the sky. Authorities advised families to remain sealed in their fallout shelters for several weeks after an attack to let toxic dust settle.

Preparedness Versus Peace These early civil defense preparations were founded on the expectations of an atomic bomb attack. By the mid-1950s, the development of far more powerful H-bombs raised questions about the effectiveness of such methods. Facing this new threat, the FCDA determined that the only practical way to protect large numbers of people during an attack was to evacuate them from target cities. "It's much better to get people out, even if in the process you may kill some," said a civil defense planner, "than to have millions of Americans just stay there and be killed."

The FCDA designed a large-scale civil defense drill, Operation Alert, to test how quickly cities could be evacuated. On June 15, 1955, sirens wailed across the country, sparking mixed reactions. Some people ducked into bomb shelters, others fled town, but many paid little or no attention to the drill. In a subsequent editorial, the *New York Times* observed that millions of people would have died if this had been a real attack. The editorial concluded that:

> This demonstration gives new emphasis to President Eisenhower's dictum [observation] that war no longer presents the possibility of victory or defeat, but only . . . varying degrees of destruction, and that there is no substitute for a just and lasting peace.
>
> —*New York Times*, June 16, 1955

The FCDA continued Operation Alert drills throughout the 1950s. For a growing number of Americans, the drills presented an opportunity to protest the nuclear arms race. In 1960, a group of young mothers in New York City organized hundreds of protesters around their belief that "Peace is the only defense against nuclear war."

Increasing anxieties among Americans about the nuclear arms race spawned a series of protests. Many of these protesters were women. The woman above marches to protest atomic bomb tests.

3. Marriage, Families, and a Baby Boom

The year 1946 was one second old when a Philadelphia woman, married to a navy machinist, gave birth to a baby girl. Seconds later, a Chicago woman and her army trombone-playing husband welcomed their newborn son. For both sets of parents, these births may have been long-awaited, joyful events. But for demographers studying human population growth, these births marked the beginning of the largest population boom in U.S. history.

A Marriage Boom Leads to a Baby Boom Marriage and birthrates dropped during the Depression because economic woes caused people to postpone life-altering decisions. The future looked brighter after World War II, so in 1946 alone, there were almost 2.3 million marriages in the United States—more than 600,000 above the previous year. More people were marrying, and at a younger age, than during the war years. The average marrying age in the 1950s was 20 for women and 22 for men.

Getting married and starting a family was emphasized as an important step for women living in the 1950s. An article in the *New York Times Magazine* warned, "A girl who hasn't a man in her sight by the time she is 20 is not altogether wrong in fearing that she may never get married." Many of these newlywed couples soon began families, creating an American baby boom.

Many of these newlyweds immediately started families, at the same time that older couples who had delayed having children also began families of their own. "It seems to me," observed a visitor from Great Britain, "that every other young housewife I see is pregnant." This resulted in a **baby boom**, or a large increase in the number of babies born in proportion to the size of the population. At the baby boom's peak, in 1957, 4.3 million births were recorded. In 1964, the last year of the baby boom, four in ten Americans were under the age of 20.

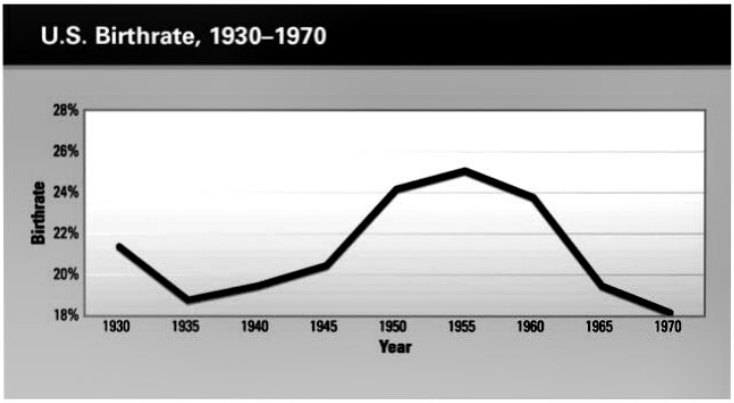
Economists and businesspeople were thrilled by the baby boom. Signs in New York City subway cars informed riders that:

> Your future is great in a growing America.
> Every day 11,000 babies are born in America.
> This means new business, new jobs, new opportunities.

Babies overflowing maternity wards boosted diaper services and baby food bottlers' sales. Home sales also boomed as young families flocked to the suburbs in search of living space. Factories worked overtime to fill new homes with furniture and appliances and to put a car in every garage.

Schools were challenged to fit the millions of children reaching schooling age each year. During the 1950s, California opened new schools at the rate of one per week to make room for the baby boomers. Older schools added temporary buildings to house more classrooms, while some handled the flood by offering two shifts of classes, one in the morning and another in the afternoon. Despite these efforts, large classes seating two students to a desk were common during the decade.

Family Roles: Working Dads and Stay-at-Home Moms The majority of baby boomers grew up in so-called traditional families, with working dads and stay-at-home moms. The importance of marriage and family was emphasized in marriage manuals of the day. "Whether you are a man or a woman, the family is the unit to which you most genuinely belong," wrote Dr. John Schindler in *The Woman's Guide to Better Living 52 Weeks a Year*, "The family is the center of your living. If it isn't, you've gone far astray."



Economic prosperity following World War II triggered a baby boom that lasted until 1964. Almost as suddenly as it began, the boom ended. By 1966, the birthrate had dropped below the lowest level of the Depression years. In only two years, the baby boom had become a baby bust.

The belief that mothers should not work outside the home unless necessitated by economic reasons was promoted by leading childcare expert Dr. Benjamin Spock. First published in 1946, Spock's *Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care* was a best seller for many years. Spock advised mothers to devote themselves full-time to raising their children, arguing that any distraction from that task, like a job or hobby, could damage a young child.

The mass media reinforced traditional family roles. Magazines, movies, and advertisements' portrayal of the ideal family depicted the husband as the breadwinner and the wife as the homemaker. The homemaker role was expanded to include a number of jobs, such that a mom became a teacher, doctor, nurse, cook, adviser, decorator, housekeeper, manager, and chauffeur all in one.

A new medium called television idealized this family on screen. In *Leave It to Beaver*, character June Cleaver was a stay-at-home mom who wore high heels and pearls while working in the kitchen. When asked what kind of girl her son Wally should marry, she answered, "Oh, some sensible girl from a nice family . . . who's a good cook and can keep a nice house and see that he's happy." Jim Anderson, the sensible dad in *Father Knows Best*, calmly solved his family's problems every evening when he got home from work. In one episode, he advised his tomboy daughter Kathy to act helpless around boys. "The worst thing you can do," he told her, "is to try to beat a man at his own game."

These television shows taught children the roles they would be expected to play as adults. Children received this message in other ways as well, like visiting toy stores filled with dolls and tea sets for girls and toy guns for boys. Girls were given miniature hope chests to encourage them to dream of getting married one day. Children's books like *The Happy Family*, a Little Golden Book popular at the time, reinforced traditional roles with sayings such as: "The happiest time of the day is when Father comes home from work."

The strong societal emphasis on marriage led many young women to forgo a college education, so women's college enrollment rates dropped sharply. Although some women pursued careers after college, many others dropped out early to get married, or transitioned straight from graduation into marriage. One professor at Smith College complained of having to cancel a final class with female senior honors students because it conflicted with too many bridal showers.

In the "traditional" 1950s family, the father worked while the mother stayed at home raising the children. In this photograph, a mother looks happy with her role as wife and mother. However, not all women considered full-time homemaking ideal.

4. Population Shifts to Suburbs and Sunbelt States

In 1941, Bill and Alfred Levitt won a government contract to build thousands of homes for war industry workers in Norfolk, Virginia. Everything went wrong at first—for one, skilled workers were in short supply, and their schedule was also too tight. Since it seemed as though the Levitts would miss their deadlines and lose money, they rethought their building process. They divided the construction process into 27 steps, and then hired and trained 27 teams of workers, each specialized in one of the steps. By the project's end, the Levitts had revolutionized the process of building homes.

Along with the booming success of Levittown's homes came the equally successful Levittown shopping centers. Families that moved into these affordable houses also gained easy access to a variety of stores. The New York Levittown was attractive to young families who wanted to live in a kid-friendly suburb.

Middle-Class Families Move to the Suburbs No industry suffered more from the Depression and wartime periods than the homebuilding industry. In these years, housing construction dropped from more than 1 million new homes a year to fewer than 100,000. At war's end, housing was in such short supply that 250 used trolley cars were sold as homes in Chicago. Returning veterans were eager to buy homes and start families, and the GI Bill was ready to help them acquire home loans at low interest rates, but there were few homes to buy.

The Levitt brothers took advantage of this housing dearth, working to create places where veterans could use their home loans. In 1947, they broke ground on **Levittown**, the first planned housing community in the nation. Levittown was located on Long Island, about 20 miles from New York City, where the brothers built 17,447 homes by 1951. They would eventually build two more Levittowns before 1960, in Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

To lower costs, the Levitts built small, boxy, almost identical homes with two bedrooms and one bathroom. Work crews moved from house to house to complete their specialized jobs, including tile crews and floor crews. One team specialized in white paint, while another one only applied red paint. By mass-producing their homes, the Levitts accelerated production, building 36 houses a day in 1948. They were also able to keep prices of their homes under $8,000.

The first Levittown in New York was a type of suburb called a bedroom community. Most people who lived there commuted by car or public transportation to jobs in New York City. Although the commute could be tiring, countless young families were eager to live in a clean, safe, child-friendly suburb. Between 1950 and 1956, the number of Americans living in suburban communities increased by 46 percent.

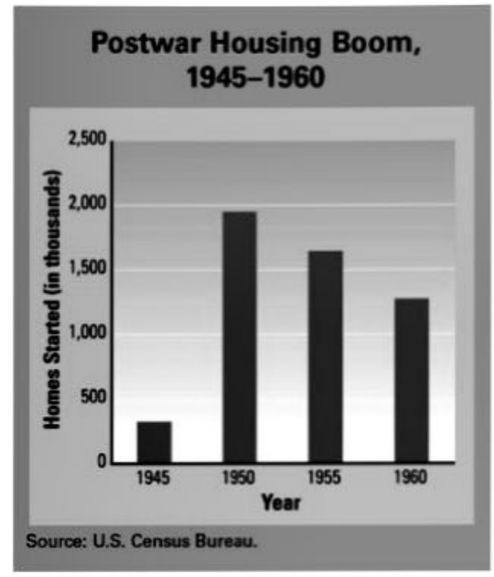
These new suburbanites were overwhelmingly white and middle class. Many suburbs, including Levittown, did not sell to African Americans. This racial and class homogeneity was part of the suburbs' appeal for buyers. "Everybody lives on the same side of the tracks," observed the *Saturday Evening Post* in 1954. "They have no slums to fret about, no families of conspicuous wealth to envy, no traditional upper crust to whet and thwart their social aspirations [ambitions]."

Weather and Wages Spur Migration to the Sunbelt Not only were Americans moving from cities to suburbs, but they were also migrating from the northern half of the country to the Sunbelt. This "belt" of warm-weather states stretched across the southern third of the United States, reaching from Florida to California.

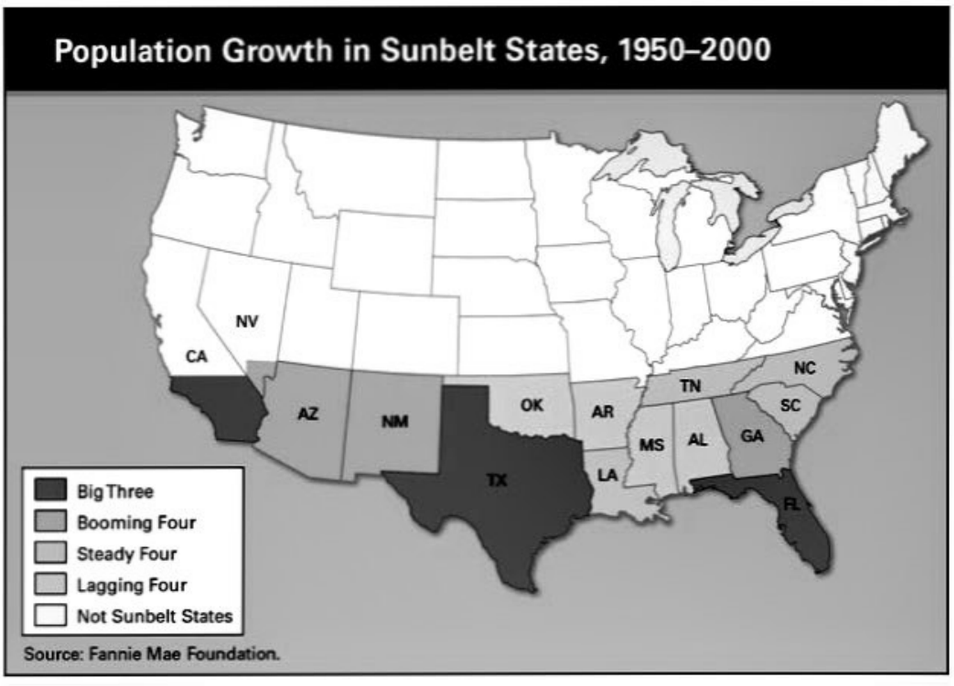
After World War II, manufacturers and other businesses began relocating to the Sunbelt, attracted by low labor costs. Plus, unions were less involved in the Sunbelt states than in the older industrial regions of the North. The Sunbelt tourist industry also grew as families flocked to sunny beaches and new attractions like Disneyland.

As businesses moved south, people followed. California was equally affected by this migration—between 1950 and 1960, California's population grew by 50 percent, from around 10.6 million to more than 15.7 million people. Other Sunbelt states experienced similar growth.

Two technological advancements enabled this large population shift. The first was the design and construction of massive water projects in the arid Southwest, including building dams on major rivers to capture water in giant reservoirs. This water was then distributed through a system of canals and aqueducts to fast-growing cities like Phoenix, Arizona, Las Vegas, Nevada, and Los Angeles, California. The second key technology was developing room air conditioners for home use, which made summers bearable in Sunbelt states like Florida and Arizona. Yearly room air conditioners sales increased from around 30,000 in 1946 to over 1 million in 1953.



The rapid growth in housing construction was made possible by a revolution in home construction techniques. Using assemblyline methods pioneered by Henry Ford, homebuilders like the Levitt brothers mass-produced homes at an astonishing rate. In 1948, the Levitt bothers built 36 homes per day.



The Sunbelt states did not grow at the same rate. Populations in each of the "Big Three," California, Texas, and Florida, expanded by more than 13 million people between 1950 and 2000. The "Booming Four" also showed large gains, while the "Steady Four" grew at a similar rate to the rest of the country. The "Lagging Four" grew only half as fast compared to the nation as a whole.

5. The Triumph of the Automobile

On September 4, 1957, a new car appeared in Ford showrooms around the country. Consumers lined up in record numbers to view the latest Ford creation, the Edsel. Ford executives were thrilled until they realized that people were looking but not buying, since most people did not like what they saw. The Edsel was designed to be the biggest, flashiest, most luxurious Ford ever, but public response was less than enthusiastic. "One member of the media called it 'an Oldsmobile sucking a lemon,'" recalls a rare Edsel owner, "and another called it 'a Pontiac pushing a toilet seat.'" After three years of poor sales, Ford gave up on the Edsel. Such failures were rare in the 1950s, as automobile sales stayed strong throughout the decade, accounting for the growth of suburbs and increased demand for cars.

Named after Henry Ford's only child, the Edsel sold poorly. Only 181,000 were produced over a three-year span. Today, the Edsel is considered a "poor man's collectors car." According to Edsel historian Phil Skinner, "There are a lot more Edsels out there than people who love them."

The Middle-Class Dream: Two Cars in Every Garage

Suburban life depended on automobile access. Because most suburbs lacked public transportation, fathers commuted by car to their jobs in nearby cities, while mothers drove to supermarkets and suburban shopping centers. After school, children relied on the family car to attend their music lessons or sports games. Suburban families found they needed not one, but two cars in their garage.

Cars were more than a necessity in this booming consumer culture, as they also became a **status symbol**, or a sign of wealth and prestige. Automakers encouraged car owners to trade in last year's model for the newest one in order to keep up with their neighbors. Companies urged consumers to "move up" to ever-more-expensive cars to demonstrate their material success. The Edsel was introduced as "the smart car for the young executive or professional family on the way up," and a 1958 ad proclaimed, "They'll know you've arrived when you drive up in an Edsel." An Oldsmobile ad from same year enthused,

> Obviously this is a car to attract attention. Its precedent-breaking beauty fully deserves all the applause owners are giving it. Men and women who have just recently moved up to a '58 Oldsmobile from another make are the loudest in their praise . . . proudest of their new possessions.

How Did Automakers Persuade Americans to Buy a New Car Every Year?

For many Americans in the 1950s, buying a new car was a yearly ritual. Automakers encouraged this practice in two ways. First, each year, they made changes to the style, so that each year's models looked different from those of the year before. Second, they introduced new features every year, designed to make driving more pleasurable. The combined effect was to make last year's car look and feel old long before its useful lifetime was over.

Model: 1949 Chevrolet Fleetline
Style: 2-door sedan
Base price: $1,492
New standard features: starter button, 2-speed heater
New options: white sidewall tires, AM-FM radio

Throughout most of the 1950s, car sales surpassed 7 million a year. By 1958, more than 67 million cars were on the road, and nearly 12 million families owned two or more cars. Two years later, the census reported that 65 percent of working Americans drove cars to work.

Roads to Everywhere: The Interstate Highway System As the majority of Americans began to depend on cars for transportation, they demanded increased, improved roads. State and federal lawmakers responded by funding new highway construction programs, the most ambitious of which was authorized by Congress in 1956 to construct a nationwide **interstate highway system**. The system's goal was to connect major cities across the country by a network of super highways.

President Eisenhower strongly supported federal funding of the interstate highway system. He recalled the usefulness of the four-lane autobahns, or high-speed highways, built by Germany in the 1930s to move troops during World War II. With the United States engaged in the Cold War, he viewed a system of superhighways as an important element of the nation's defense. Both troops and weapons could be transported easily and quickly in a network of high-speed highways.

By 1960, about 10,000 miles of interstate highway had been constructed. The modern system has around 45,000 miles of highway, built with equally high standards. Interstate highways are divided, and have at least two lanes in either direction. Access is controlled by on-ramps and off-ramps, and the flow of traffic is not interrupted by traffic lights or railroad crossings. Curves are engineered to be safe at high speeds, while rest areas are interspersed for travelers' comfort.

The interstate highway system benefited the country in many ways. It made travel by road over long distances both faster and safer, and created economic opportunities for roadside businesses, such as gas stations, motels, and restaurants, which arose near interstate exits. By improving nationwide access, the highway system gave people more choices of where to live, work, shop, and vacation. For better or worse, the highway system also furthered Americans' dependence on cars and trucks as their main form of transportation.

Model: 1955 Chevrolet Bel Air
Style: 4-door sedan
Base price: $1,932
New standard features: electric windshield wipers, back-up lights
New options: electric clock, power windows and seats, spare tire on back bumper

Model: 1959 Chevrolet Bel Air
Style: 4-door sedan
Base price: $2,440
New standard features: vinyl interior
New options: air conditioner, leather seats, dual exhausts, cruise control

Model: 1962 Chevrolet Bel Air
Style: 4-door sedan
Base price: $2,510
New standard features: two front-seat safety belts
New options: front bucket seats, padded dash