

**America 1920-1973: Opportunity and inequality**  
**Part 3 – Post War America**

| American society and the economy  | African American Civil Rights  | America and the 'Great Society'   |
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| <p>After WW2 the USA was the only industrial nation not to have suffered bombing on the mainland. Therefore America was producing nearly half of the worlds goods. The economy continued to grow from 1945 to the 1970s and most people enjoyed a comfortable lifestyle.</p> <p><b>American Dream</b> – many wealthy white Americans moved to the suburbs, relying on motor transport and enjoying all the modern conveniences. <b>Consumerism</b> ensured economic growth as people kept buying the latest models to replace old goods. Affluence led to a growth in popular culture.</p> <p><b>Teenagers</b> had more leisure time and spending money than previous generations. In the 1950s they began to be associated with rebellion as they set up their own social standards.</p> <p><b>Rock and roll</b> music became increasingly popular with performers such as Elvis Presley. He had at least 170 hit singles.</p> <p><b>Television</b> ownership developed rapidly. 1948: 0.4% of households had a TV. By 1958 it was 83.2%. Programming was dominated by commercial sponsors and advertising. National broadcasting, especially the news, did create a national consciousness.</p> <p><b>McCarthyism</b> – People believed American values of democracy and freedom were under threat from communism. These fears turned inwards and Congress investigated communist involvement in the government, education and film industry. Many were sacked. Many started to name others. Senator McCarthy held trials of suspected communists. Many were found guilty with little proof. The hearings were televised and careers were ruined. When McCarthy went after the army people thought he had gone too far. However, the damage was done to people's lives and America's reputation around the world.</p> | <p>Many southern states enforced <b>Jim Crow Laws</b> that segregated white and black people. They were supposed to be 'separate but equal' but Black Americans never got a fair deal.</p> <p><b>Education</b> – Black and White children had to go to separate schools. This was legal as long as the schools were equally well equipped. This was never the case and in <i>Brown v board of education of Topeka, 1954</i>, the Supreme court ruled that all schools should be integrated. This was resisted and in 1957 President Eisenhower had to send the army to protect Black students attending <b>Little Rock High School</b> in Arkansas.</p> <p>In Montgomery, Black people had to sit at the back of the bus. In 1955 Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat to a white man and was arrested. This sparked the <b>Montgomery bus boycott</b> led by Martin Luther King. After a year, bus segregation was declared illegal.</p> <p>This inspired other people to take <b>direct action</b> such as <b>sit ins</b> and <b>freedom rides</b>. The 1963 <b>March on Washington</b> campaigned for full civil rights (including the vote) and culminated in the "I have a dream speech"</p> <p>The <b>Black Power movement</b> and its leaders such as Malcom X argued that force should be used to achieve equality. There were also many race riots such as LA in 1965 and Detroit 1967. Black people didn't feel the white police force protected them.</p> <p><b>Civil Rights Act 1964</b> made it illegal to discriminate in housing and employment. <b>Voting Rights Act 1965</b> guaranteed Black People's right to vote.</p> | <p>Republican President Eisenhower was replaced by Democratic President Kennedy (JFK) in 1961. In 1963 JFK was assassinated and replaced by President Johnson (LBJ). JFK and LBJ promised changes in American society. These included; extension of unemployment benefit, improved housing in poor cities, social security benefits. Johnson introduced <b>Medicare and Medicaid</b> (1965) to provide health insurance for poor Americans. However, both presidents are mostly remembered for foreign policy events (Berlin wall, Cuban missile crisis, Vietnam war.)</p> <p>In the 1960s feminist movements began to challenge the idea that a woman's place was in the home. The <b>National Organisation for Women (NOW)</b> was set up in 1966. There were many successes. <b>Equal Pay Act 1963</b> established principle of equal pay, but with exceptions. <b>Roe v wade 1973</b> made abortion legal in the first trimester. In 1972 <b>contraception</b> was made legally available to unmarried couples.</p> <p>However there was opposition to the pace of change, including among women, particularly from the religious and middle class.</p> <p>Women also protested against male sexism e.g. men's clubs and magazines. Women's magazines were also criticised as well as beauty contests.</p> <p>In 1970s protest died down but people were more aware of the need for an equal society.</p> |

