The presidency of Dwight D. Eisenhower was shaped in large part by the Cold War and related conflicts.

Key Terms and People

Richard M. Nixon  vice president under President Eisenhower
John Foster Dulles  secretary of state under Eisenhower
brinkmanship  policy of getting to the brink, or verge, of war without going to war
massive retaliation  use of great force to settle serious conflicts
CIA  Central Intelligence Agency; formed to spy on foreign governments
Nikita Khrushchev  leader of the Soviet Union after Stalin’s death
Warsaw Pact  military alliance of the Soviet-dominated countries of Eastern Europe
summit  meeting of heads of government
SEATO  Southeast Asia Treaty Organization; alliance against Communist aggression
Eisenhower Doctrine  declaration of the right of the United States to help any nation in the Middle East trying to resist Communist aggression

Section Summary

THE ELECTION OF 1952
In 1952 Dwight D. Eisenhower was the Republican candidate for president. In his campaign he criticized Truman’s handling of the Korean War. The war was dragging on. Thousands of Americans were being killed. Eisenhower’s vice presidential running mate was Richard M. Nixon. During the campaign Nixon was accused of being dishonest. He went on television to defend himself. Eisenhower went on to a solid win.

THE COLD WAR CONTINUES
Eisenhower visited Korea and got the stalled peace talks going again. Peace finally came in 1953. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles helped Eisenhower with his foreign policy. Dulles believed in a policy of brinkmanship. This means getting close to war without going to war. For it to work, the United States had to have enough nuclear weapons for massive retaliation. This meant being ready to use great force to settle serious conflicts. The Central
Intelligence Agency, or CIA, was formed to spy on foreign governments. It also took part in secret actions against foreign governments.

In 1953, Stalin died. The new Soviet leader was Nikita Khrushchev. Under him, the Soviet Union created the Warsaw Pact. This was a military alliance of Eastern European countries. An anti-Communist revolt in Poland was put down by force. When Hungary rebelled, the Soviets invaded with tanks. Despite these problems, the United States and the Soviet Union had their first summit meeting in 1955. A summit is a meeting of the heads of government.

COLD WAR “HOT SPOTS”
In 1954 France withdrew from its former colony Vietnam. During peace talks, Vietnam was divided in two. The north came under Communist control. There was supposed to be an election to allow the Vietnamese people to decide what kind of government to have. Eisenhower and Dulles worried that they would choose a Communist government. If that happened, they reasoned, other nations in the area would follow. They helped form SEATO, the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization. SEATO and the United States supported the creation of an anti-Communist nation, South Vietnam. However, the leader of this nation angered his people with his harsh government.

In the Middle East there was tension between Israel and its Arab neighbors. In 1956 Egypt took control of the Suez Canal from Britain and France. Israel, Britain, and France attacked Egypt. The Soviets threatened to help Egypt. Eisenhower ordered the attackers out of Egypt. Egypt kept control of the canal. Eisenhower issued the Eisenhower Doctrine. It said that the United States had the right to help any nation in the Middle East trying to resist Communist aggression.

CHALLENGE ACTIVITY
**Critical Thinking: Evaluate** Based on the evidence, how much of a threat do you think the Soviets really posed to the United States? Write two paragraphs explaining your position.
Key Terms and People

**hydrogen bomb** a bomb that gets its power by fusing together hydrogen atoms

**ICBM** intercontinental ballistic missiles; missiles with nuclear weapons attached that could travel thousands of miles to strike their targets

**satellite** an object in orbit around Earth

**Sputnik** the first artificial satellite; launched by the Soviet Union

**NASA** National Aeronautics and Space Administration; agency in charge of U.S. space programs

**nuclear fallout** particles of radioactive material produced by nuclear explosions

**Section Summary**

**THE HYDROGEN BOMB**

Atomic bombs ended World War II. The United States searched for even more powerful weapons. Nuclear testing took place in several states. Americans also worked on an entirely new type of bomb. This was the **hydrogen bomb**. It got its power from fusing hydrogen atoms together. This fusion is the same process that creates the energy of the sun and stars. Americans thought this bomb would give them an advantage over the Soviet Union. Soon, however, the Soviets developed their own hydrogen bomb.

What new type of bomb did Americans develop?

_______________________

How did American military strategy change?

_______________________

_______________________

Underline the two ways that nuclear bombs could be delivered to their targets.

_______________________
In 1957 the Soviets launched the first artificial satellite into space. It was called Sputnik. A satellite is an object in orbit around Earth. The launch of Sputnik caused concern in the United States. It seemed that Soviet scientists had greater technical skill than American ones. Americans worried that the Soviets would create better weapons. The United States created NASA, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, to take charge of its space programs. In 1958 Congress passed the National Defense Education Act. It provided hundreds of millions of dollars for education.

**AMERICANS REACT TO THE THREAT OF NUCLEAR WAR**

Americans were afraid of the destruction caused by nuclear weapons. Many people were also afraid of nuclear fallout. Fallout is particles of radioactive material produced by nuclear explosions. Fallout can cause burns and increase the risk of future health problems. These include cancer and birth defects. To prepare for a nuclear attack, the Truman administration created the Federal Civil Defense Administration (FCDA). The FCDA distributed pamphlets and educational films. Schoolchildren and workers practiced what to do in an emergency. Some people built bomb shelters in their backyards. Many communities installed air raid sirens. People lived in fear of a nuclear attack.

When Eisenhower was leaving office, he warned of a new danger. He pointed out that there was now an arms industry that stayed in business during peacetime. He called this the military-industrial complex. He warned that it posed a threat to freedom.

**CHALLENGE ACTIVITY**

**Critical Thinking: Design** Bomb shelters were designed for people to stay inside without leaving or opening a door for several weeks. Make a list of all the things you would have to put in a bomb shelter to live there for several weeks.
**Postwar America**

**Section 3**

**Main Idea**

Television was a major influence on American culture in the 1950s, mirroring larger changes in technology and culture.

**Key Terms and People**

Lucille Ball  
**Lucille Ball** popular comic actress who was a pioneer in the television industry

Transistor  
**Transistor** device that replaced vacuum tubes to make electronic devices, such as radios and computers, smaller and better

Integrated circuit  
**Integrated circuit** a single piece of material that includes a number of transistors and other electronic components

Jonas Salk  
**Jonas Salk** developer of the polio vaccine

Vaccine  
**Vaccine** a preparation that uses a killed or weakened form of a germ to help the body build its defenses against that germ

Levittown  
**Levittown** a suburban development of the 1950s that featured affordable homes

Sunbelt  
**Sunbelt** the southern and western portions of the United States

Interstate Highway System  
**Interstate Highway System** network of high-speed roads across the United States

**Section Summary**

**Television Changes American Life**

By the end of World War II, television was ready for the home. By 1959 more than 40 million Americans had TVs. Politicians learned to use television to communicate with people. Advertisers also learned to use it to reach people with messages about their products. There were many popular television programs. **Lucille Ball** made the move from movies to television. Some people began to question television’s influence. They especially worried about its impact on children. The television industry adopted its own standards. Law enforcement would always be shown in a positive light. Criminals would always be shown as “bad guys.” Congress decided not to take any action to control television programming.

**Other Technological Developments of the 1950s**

In the 1940s the first computers were built. They were very large. In 1947 the **transistor** was invented. It was...
a device that took the place of vacuum tubes. The invention of the transistor led to much better electronics. Transistors allowed smaller and better computers to be built. Another development was the integrated circuit. It was a single piece of material that included a number of transistors and other electronic components. Integrated circuits are also called computer chips. They helped speed the development of computers.

In 1952, Jonas Salk developed a vaccine against polio. A vaccine is a preparation that uses a killed or weakened form of a germ to help the body build its own defenses against that germ. The vaccine was used widely by the mid-1950s. The number of cases of polio dropped sharply.

CULTURAL CHANGE IN THE 1950S
The American economy did well in the 1950s. The baby boom also continued. New suburban housing communities like Levittown were built. They included affordable single-family homes. The new homes were filled with new appliances. New TVs urged people to buy even more. Millions of people bought cars. Many Americans moved to the Sunbelt. This is the southern and western portions of the United States. The nation started building the Interstate Highway System. It is a network of high-speed roads that crisscross the country.

Many Americans were well off. But there were also many poor Americans. Michael Harrington wrote about them in The Other America. William H. Whyte wrote The Organization Man. It was about the push toward “sameness” among business workers. Among many writers and artists, rebellion was fashionable. The so-called Beat generation posed as outsiders. Young people expressed their rebellion through rock and roll music. The rebels were mostly males, however. Women still tended to fill traditional roles.

CHALLENGE ACTIVITY
Critical Thinking: Predict How do you think your life would be different if there was no television? Write three paragraphs explaining your thoughts.