Name:

Date:

School:

Facilitator:

8.05 Notes Outline

**“Postwar America”**

Complete the 8.05 Notes Outline as you review the lesson.

Explore 5:

Why would a picture of a family watching TV be significant to postwar history?

If someone from the 1940s or 1950s was suddenly transported to the present, what two changes in technology do you think would be most surprising?

I. The Economy

Postwar Economy

Soldiers returning home from Europe and the Pacific were anxious to put the war behind them, focus on starting a family, and simply enjoy life and the comforts of home.

Due to rationing during the war and the economic struggles of the Great Depression before it, it had been a long time since Americans had the money and/or the opportunity to buy the consumer goods they desired.

Families and the Economy Grow

After World War II, young men returned from war anxious to start families of their own. Birthrates skyrocketed and the period between 1946 and 1964 was known as the "     " with more than 50 million babies born.

The gross national product(     ) more than doubled between 1945 and 1960, growing from $212 billion to $504 billion. The       increased from $1,526 to $2,788.

*The Baby Boom Years*

The biggest boom in post-World War II America was in babies. Two million and seven hundred thousand babies were born in 1945.

Advancements in Technology

New technological advancements spurred industrial growth.

With greater disposable income, Americans were eager to buy the newest and improved consumer products like washing machines, dishwashers, gas-powered lawnmowers, and vacuum cleaners.

The technology that impacted American society the most was the       which was developed in the 1930s and became popular after WWII.

Americans fell in love with TV and by 1953, 2/3 of all American Families owned a television.

*Television Comes to America*

The main product of the 1950s that fascinated all people, all the time was television. Television offered a new way to reach the American public and transformed both popular culture and the political arena.

Advancements in Science

Advances in medicine included a      developed by       and advancements in antibiotics, such as      , which developed during the war and saved countless lives.

Advancements during the war in       and atomic energy changed American society. In 1947 the first transistor was invented.       became a new source of energy.

FDR established the Office of Scientific Research and Development to recruit scientists and coordinate scientific and technological efforts for WWII.

II. The Suburbs

Suburbia and the Middle Class

A robust economy coupled with a growing population led

to significant growth in consumer demand for homes and automobiles. The "American Dream" became characterized by a home in the       and a car in the garage. Many families wanted to escape cities that had become overcrowded during the war. America's      was growing with the economy and population and moving to the suburbs.

Welcome to Levittown

Affordability was the key element to living in the suburbs. Ten miles from New York City, William Levitt built mass-produced homes, breaking down the building process into steps patterned after the assembly line and making it more economical.

     , New York was one of the earliest examples of a planned residential community. New families flocked to the affordable housing and other Levittowns sprang up across the country.

Opportunities in Suburbia for GIs

For many veterans, ordinary life meant not only higher education, but the achievement of the American dream - home ownership. The      or the      of 1944 gave veterans low-interest mortgages to purchase their new homes and pay for college.

The GI Bill coupled with the federal government's offer of income tax deduction on home mortgage interest payments, offered Americans affordable housing options in the suburbs.

New Freeway Construction

The American dream was made possible for many through massive construction of new highways, allowing the growth of the suburb. The      provided money to build interstates.

New interstates provided       in the event of a nuclear attack. Newly constructed interstates resulted in new shopping malls, restaurants, drive-ins, amusement parks, and greater car production.

Population Shifts

The population explosion and broader wealth distribution also brought about demographic changes and       in the country. Families left the overcrowded, industrialized northeast and headed towards the      states.

Newly created industries and federal dollars were reallocated to the south and west coast and people moved to find jobs and create a better life for their families.