



Part One: American people and the 'Boom'.



Causes One: Republican Policies

- Laissez Faire – This was an attitude to government held by the Republican Party. They believed that staying out of big business allowed people to be more independent and self sufficient. This meant low taxes and minimal government involvement.
- Tariffs – This was when the Republican government placed taxes on foreign goods. This meant that Americans bought American made goods, as they were cheaper.



Causes Two: World War One

- Before World War One, America had been isolationist (kept out of Europe's business). However, following the outbreak, America began selling weapons and resources to their allies.
- These sales resulted in over \$17 billion being made by the time the war had finished. This money was then fed back into the American economy, sparking the growth of employment and business.



Mass Production/Natural Resources

- In 1919, Henry Ford popularised the assembly line. This meant products could be made much faster, leading to more sales, profit and jobs.
- Alongside this, America had a wealth of natural resources, meaning they didn't have to buy foreign resources to build their products. This saved money!



Stocks and Credit

- In the 1920s, credit made things more affordable to many Americans, so many borrowed to buy things they couldn't afford.
- The stock market also allowed people to invest money into to small companies in the hopes they could multiply their money

These economic developments led to America experiencing an **economic boom**. This generated more disposable income, which led to many social and cultural changes (see below).

Entertainment

- Jazz became popular during the Harlem Renaissance, a time of great creativity in Black communities. Musicians like **Louis Armstrong** helped shape its exciting, improvised sound.
- Sports like baseball, boxing and basketball became popular pastimes. These developments were furthered by the development of radio.
- Cinema made huge developments during this time. The introduction of **'talkies'** and actors like **Charlie Chaplin** made it a preferred pastime.

Women

- In 1920, women won the **right to vote** in the USA, giving them more power and a bigger voice in politics.
- Many young women became **flappers**, wearing new styles, going out to parties, and enjoying more freedom than before. They smoked, drank and wore more makeup.
- Despite these changes, **women in the countryside** did not see as much of a shift. Many women in rural areas were kept in traditional stereotypes during the 1920s.

Cars

- In the 1920s, car production changed massively due to **Henry Ford's assembly line**. This made cars quicker and cheaper to produce, especially the **Model T**. Mass production meant ordinary Americans could afford cars, boosting other industries like steel, glass, and oil, and transforming travel and everyday life.
- Ford made cars affordable, selling for **\$295** at its peak price.
- Ford also improved the lives of his workers, paying them **\$5 a day** and giving them their first weekends off.

Technology

- In the 1920s, technology developed rapidly, transforming daily life. Mass production made new inventions affordable, like **radios, vacuum cleaners, and refrigerators**. Electricity spread to more homes, improving comfort and convenience. Cars became common thanks to Ford's assembly line, while new communication technologies and cinema created a modern, connected, and consumer-focused society.

Examples of Inequality

Farmers and Old Industries	Farmers did not benefit from the 'Boom' – their total income dropped from \$22 billion in 1919 to \$13 billion in 1928. Other industries such as coal mining also faced challenges from new industry like electricity and oil. The number of people unemployed (without a job) was the same in 1929 as in 1920 (5%).
The Red Scare	Many Americans were frightened by the Communist Revolution in Russia in October 1917. Some believed that a communist coup was going to happen in the USA, especially as the American Socialist Party and the American Communist Party were established during this period. Immigrants were under suspicion of being involved in plotting a revolution. This fear led to the police attacking left wing groups, people fearing to join Trade Unions and the Palmer Raids where 6,000 people, who were mostly not communist supporters, were arrested and held in a prison without a trial – 556 of them were even deported.
Immigration	By the 1920s America had been described as a 'melting pot' of cultures, with over 40 million people from all over the world having arrived. To stop immigration in the 1920s the USA introduced Literacy Tests (1917) The Emergency Quota Act (1921) and the National Origins Act (1924) these laws heavily favoured Western European immigrants over those from other areas.
Sacco and Vanzetti	An example of the discrimination in the USA during this time is the court case of two Italian immigrants into America, Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti. They were both accused of robbing a shoe factory and killing two people. The evidence used against them was poor, for example one witness could only say that he saw people with 'oily skin'. However, despite many appeals, in August 1927 they were both executed by electrocution in Charlestown prison.
The KKK	The KKK was formed in the 1860s by former soldiers. They used parades, beatings and lynching's to intimidate African Americans. They also attacked Jews, Catholics and immigrants. The Klan declined at the end of the 19th century but started to become more popular with the release of the film 'The Birth of a Nation' in 1915. The Klan had more influence in the southern and mid-west states. By 1924 the KKK had 4.5 million members and the states of Oregon and Oklahoma had governors who both belonged to the KKK. The Klan became less influential after 1925 when its leader David Stephenson was convicted of a viscous murder.
Failure of Prohibition and Organised Crime	<p>People who supported prohibition (the banning of alcohol) were known as the 'dries'. They wanted alcohol banning because of religion, the war with Germany (who made a lot of beer) and lawlessness. In 1917 the 18th Amendment to the Constitution banned alcohol and this was made law with the Volstead Act in January 1920.</p> <p>Despite a 30% fall in alcohol consumption, there was not enough agents to enforce Prohibition laws and it led to an increase in organised crime and criminal activity. Speakeasies were secret bars where people could get alcohol. Prohibition was repealed in December 1933.</p> <p>Al Capone was a gangster who made money from selling illegal alcohol during Prohibition (he made around \$60 million a year). He was involved in bribing Chicago's police, government workers and judges. By 1929, he had destroyed all other gangs in Chicago (committing at least 300 murders) – the most famous was the St. Valentine's day massacre in 1929 where his men dressed as police officers murdered 7 members of his rival (Bugs Moran) gang. Al Capone was eventually arrested for tax evasion.</p>



1930s: Crash and Depression

The Wall Street Crash and The Great Depression

The Wall Street Crash led to a huge downfall in American way of life. Those who could not repay their loans went bankrupt. Businesses reduced production, and unemployment shot up. Homelessness rose, and Hoovervilles and soup kitchens became common.

Further to this:

1. Businesses cut jobs and wages – between 1928 and 1933, the average wage fell by 40%.
2. As people could not pay back money to banks, they had to close – by 1933 5000 banks had gone bankrupt!
3. By 1933, 14 million people were unemployed – this affected some cities worse than others – for example in Toledo 80% of people lost their job.
4. People were desperate – soup kitchens fed people and in 1931 45 people died in New York of starvation.
5. Farms also struggled – it was now more expensive to move animals than they were worth – drought and over farming led to a 'dust bowl' in the central and southern states.

The Laissez Faire attitude of the Republican government only made this worse as President Hoover became known as a 'do nothing' president.



1932: Hoover vs Roosevelt

In 1932, a new presidential election took place. Herbert Hoover's popularity had steadily declined, with him insisting that 'prosperity was just around the corner'. Meanwhile, Democratic candidate Franklin D Roosevelt however was the complete opposite and believed in 'active government'. He promised the people a 'New Deal'. Roosevelt won a landslide victory in the 1932 election, winning by 7 million votes.

The New Deal

Roosevelt had promised the American people a New Deal. The New Deal introduced measures such as the **Federal Emergency Relief Administration (helped the poor)**, **The Civilian Conservation Corps (work for young men)** and the **Agricultural Adjustment Administration (aid for farmers)**. Roosevelt also tackled the banking crisis, making sure any bank was stable before being re-opened. He also used radio to his advantage, broadcasting messages to the American people in what became known as his 'fireside chats'. The New Deal tried many things to help the American people, but progress was slow and many people criticised the New Deal. Roosevelt and his **alphabet agencies** did many things to help the American people

Despite some of the critics of the New Deal, Roosevelt was still enormously popular with most ordinary Americans (he was elected again in 1940). But was the New Deal a success? It is true, the New Deal did not totally fix the problems of the collapsing economy, as unemployment was still high in 1940. However, it did restore peoples faith in government and created millions of jobs.



Opposition to the New Deal

When Roosevelt won the 1936 Presidential election he joked "Everyone is against the New Deal except the voters."

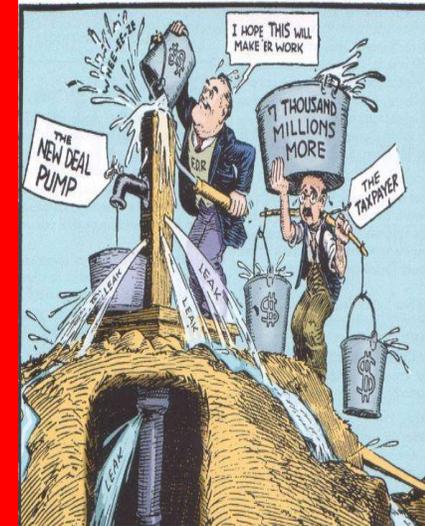
The rich had to pay more taxes to pay for the New Deal – they did not like doing this.

Business people didn't like the way the New Deal gave more rights to workers – for example with the Wagner Act.

Republicans did not like the idea of helping people too much, they accused Roosevelt of being a dictator and making the government too powerful. They wanted things to return to how it had been in the 1920s.

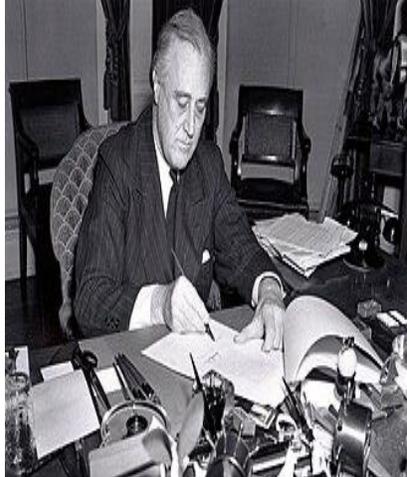
The Supreme Court argued that many of the Alphabet Agencies were blurring the lines of state and federal intervention. Roosevelt threatened to create 6 more judges who would vote against the Republican judges – the Supreme Court changed their mind.

Radical politicians felt that FDR was not going far enough and should do more to help people. An example was Huey Long (the Senator of Louisiana) who wanted a wealth tax on the richest people – however Huey Long was assassinated in 1935.



1940s - Recovery

Getting Involved - The New Deal had not completely solved all of the USAs problems by the end of the 1930s. The Second World War began in 1939 and America did not get involved directly until 1941. However, the USA was involved in supporting the allies with supplies and equipment.



Lend Lease – The main way the USA was involved until 1941 was through lend lease, where they would lend materials (such as tanks, food, medicine) to countries like the UK. Although they did not receive payment for these materials, most of these were made in American factories which gave people jobs and money – a total of \$50.1 billion worth of materials were sold this way.

After the attack on Pearl Harbour by Japan in 1941 America became more directly involved in the war – this increased the impact on Americas economy – by 1944 the USA was producing almost 50% of the weapons being made in the world. This helped the unemployed get a job – 1.5 million new workers moved to California alone! The war even helped farmers as they started selling food to other countries. Those people and businesses who had previously gone against Roosevelt and his New Deal now got involved to support the war effort. Due to new jobs, people had more money to spend and less to spend it on (during a war) so Americans bought bonds (money they would give to the government to spend and be returned later) \$129 billion of bonds was bought by Americans.

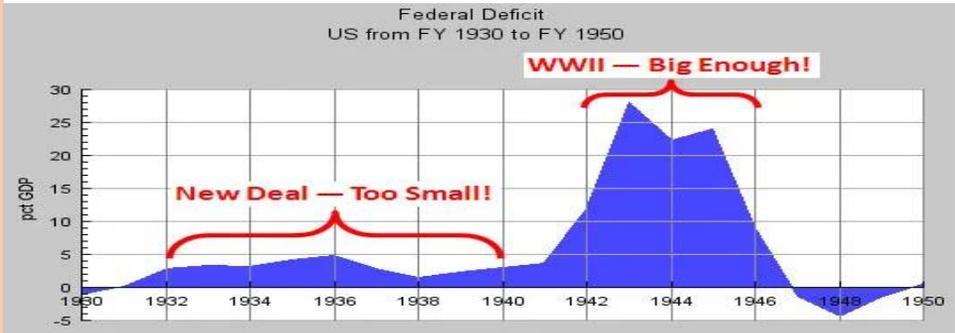


Social Impacts	
African Americans	Women
<p>Women - Before WW2, there were already 12 million working women. During the war (as many men went off to fight), 300,000 women joined the armed forces and another 7 million joined the workforce – this gave women more freedom and money to spend. When many men returned to the USA they wanted things to return to what it had been like before the war – this led to increased tension after 1945.</p>	<p>African Americans - The Second World War also changed the lives and expectations of many African Americans. Over 1 million African-American soldiers were in the armed forces during WW2. When these soldiers were in Europe, they largely experienced more freedom and tolerance than in the USA (for example there was no segregation in Britain). When they returned to the USA, they expected a change – membership of the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People) rose from 50,000 to 500,000. By the end of 1944 around 2 million African Americans were also working in factories supporting the war effort – this increased migration to cities in Northern states. Many people in the USA also saw the hypocrisy of fighting against Hitler and his discrimination whilst still having segregation based on race at home.</p>

Example Question – Which of the following was a more important reason for the recovery of the American economy after the Depression of the 1930s:

- Roosevelt's New Deal
- The impact of WW2

Explain you answer by reference to both bullet points. (12 marks)



1950s – Post-war Culture

Consumerism - During the 1950s America was producing nearly half of the world's goods. GNP (the total value of all goods and services) doubled in the 1950s. The USA was in a good position to do this at the end of World War Two because, unlike Britain, Japan, France and Germany its mainland had not suffered damage in the war.

The American Dream

With the increased car ownership, many wealthy white Americans were able to move out of the cities and live in suburban areas. Modern conveniences became the norm (such as refrigerators, washing machines and televisions) – much earlier than in Europe. The living standard of the average American was three times that of the average British person. Economic growth was stimulated by spending – Americans had saved during WW2 and were now ready to spend! Americans got used to living on credit and buying expensive items on hire purchase (paying for something over months or years). Unlike the 1920s, people replaced their luxury goods more often – for example they would get a new television every few years to get an improved model – this kept demand high and continued the cycle of prosperity. The wealth was spread to more people than in the 1920s but there were still many in the United States that did not benefit, particularly those who lived in rural areas, inner cities and people who were not white.



Social Impacts

Positive

- Rock and Roll – The 'beat' music of the 1940s transformed into rock and roll in the 1950s – seeking to entertain the new 'teenage' market. Individuals like Elvis Presley became extremely popular (apart from parents who did not like his sexual dancing) – he had over 170 hit singles and 80 top selling albums.
- Television – Television experienced the biggest growth of any household item, in 1948 only 0.4% of houses had a television, compared with 83.2% in 1958. Television started to replace reading, the cinema and the radio in many households. In the 1950s television was dominated by commercials (adverts) encouraging people to purchase the latest products. Most of the programmes were intended to entertain and the only more serious programmes would be the TV news.
- Teenagers – In the 1940s and 50s, young people in America had more leisure time and spending money than young people in the 20s and 30s. This made them different and in the 40s they began to be called 'teenagers'. This new term came with a new rebellious streak against society and their parents, inspired by cinema stars such as Marlon Brando and James Dean. Big companies specifically targeted teenagers with advertising for new products.

Negative

- McCarthyism – Despite the 'American Dream' many Americans feared that their way of life was under attack by Communists – made worse by the 'fall' of China to Communism in 1949 and the Soviet Union developing the atomic bomb in 1949.
- Americans started to look at each other suspiciously – the US Congress even set up a committee called 'Un-American Activities' to investigate suspected Communists in the government, education and film industry.
- The movement was led by Senator Joe McCarthy who spread anti-Communist hysteria, accusing hundreds of people for working for the Soviet Union – with no evidence against them! The Communist Party was banned from the USA.
- Senator McCarthy accused 45 Army officers of being communists (again with no evidence), he was asked to prove it and could not. The whole thing was shown live on TV and he was discredited and lost his job.
- Fear of communism continued into the 1960s as the Cold War developed – particularly with the fear of nuclear apocalypse.



Education and Transport – 1950s

Key Events/People	Explanation
Brown vs Topeka 1954	Linda Brown was a young African-American girl who had to travel a long, dangerous route to get to school, rather than be able to go to a 'white' school just around the corner. The National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP) took the local education administration to court over this – knowing that if the Supreme Court ruled in favour of them it would challenge the whole idea of segregation in education. In May 1954 Chief Justice Earl Warren ruled in favour of the NAACP and said that Southern States had to integrate schools 'with all deliberate speed.'
Little Rock Arkansas 1957	3 years after the Supreme Court's decision they ordered the Governor of Arkansas to allow 9 African American students attend a white school in Little Rock. The Governor sent in State troops to stop the students attending, until the President (Eisenhower) sent in Federal troops to allow them to attend – these soldiers stayed for 6 weeks in Little Rock.
Montgomery Bus Boycott 1955-56	In Montgomery, Alabama there was a local law that said African American people were only allowed to sit on the middle and back seats of a bus and had to give that space up for white people. Rosa Parks decided to challenge this and refused to give up her seat, she was arrested. The Montgomery Improvement Association was formed with Martin Luther King as its head – this organised a boycott of the local buses and the bus company lost 65% of its income. In December 1956, the Supreme Court declared Montgomery's bus laws illegal.

Direct Action and Key Individuals

<p>Sit-ins – Members of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) began a campaign to end the segregation of restaurants in Greensboro, North Carolina. They refused to leave seats that were designated for 'whites' and within a week 400 students were organising sit-ins. This soon spread to other cities and by the end of 1960 lunch counters had been desegregated in 126 cities.</p>	<p>Freedom Rides – In May 1961, activists from the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) began to ride on buses in certain states to show that the Supreme Court Ruling of 1956 was not being followed. They deliberately rode on buses in Birmingham, Alabama to show this – 200 freedom riders were arrested and spent 40 days in jail.</p>
<p>The March on Washington, 1963 – Voting had increasingly become a major priority for Civil Rights campaigners at the start of the 1960s. In August 1963, Martin Luther King led the most high-profile event – over 200,000 black people and 50,000 white people marched together to Washington. This was intended to put pressure on John F. Kennedy and had a great impact on American public support for Civil Rights.</p>	<p>Selma - After the Civil Rights Act of 1964, MLK wanted to get African-Americans voting. In 1965 he organised a voting march through Selma, Alabama. About 600 people marched and were violently attacked by the racist Police Chief, Jim Clark. These events were broadcast live on TV and shocked the nation.</p>
<p>The Black Panthers – This group were a political party and a private army that had over 2000 members. The Black Panthers believed that African Americans should arm themselves and force white people to give them equal rights. The Black Panther Party also organized education programmes for communities and schools on African American history. They often clashed with the Police, killing 9 Police Officers between 1967 and 1969.</p>	<p>The SNCC – This group became more radical with the election of Stokely Carmichael in 1966. He was critical of the methods of Martin Luther King and often talked about the concept of 'black power'.</p>
<p>Martin Luther King</p> <p>Born in 1929, his father was a Baptist Minister in the Southern States of the USA. He believed in non-violence as the way to improve Civil Rights. He is most famous for his 'I have a dream speech' during the March on Washington. MLK was Assassinated in 1968.</p>	<p>Malcolm X</p> <p>Born in 1925 and named Malcolm Little, he lived in poverty and spent time in Prison. Whilst in Prison he converted to Islam. Malcolm X believed that a more violent approach would lead to quicker change.</p>

Civil Rights Milestones

Civil Rights Act of 1964

- Ended **segregation** in public places (schools, restaurants, buses, etc.).
- Banned **discrimination** based on **race, colour, religion, sex, or national origin** in jobs and public facilities.
- Gave the federal government power to **enforce** desegregation.

Voting Rights Act of 1965

- Protected the **right to vote** for African Americans.
- Outlawed unfair voting practices like **literacy tests**.
- Allowed the federal government to **supervise elections** in states that had a history of discrimination.

Civil Rights Act of 1968 (Fair Housing Act)

- Banned **housing discrimination** based on **race, colour, religion, or national origin** (later expanded to include sex, disability, and family status).
- Helped ensure equal access to housing for everyone

Gender Rights Milestones

- **The National Organisation for Women, 1966** – Also known as NOW, this organisation adopted a ‘Bill of Rights’ at their first national conference, this included a ban of sexual discrimination and the right of women to control their reproductive lives.
- **The fight for equal pay** – in the 1960s many women petitioned, went on strike and threatened legal action to push for equal pay and opportunities. This was helped by the Equal Pay Act of 1963 which established the principle of equal pay for the same job – but even into the 1970s there was still action to push the average woman’s pay to 70% that of a man.
- **Roe vs Wade, 1973** – this landmark decision by the Supreme Court made abortion legal. This overruled the laws of some states that had made it illegal – this decision led to widespread protests. This case has recently been challenged by some states in America who want to restrict access to abortion.
- **Supreme Court ruling on equal rights, 1972** – this ruled that contraception should be available to unmarried couples in the same way as married couples. This decision led to a lot of debate and discussion in the United States – particularly in regards to religion.

New Frontier and the Great Society

The New Frontier (JFK)



Successes:

- The increase of unemployment benefit.
- More money for poor cities to improve housing and transport.
- Increased electrification for rural areas to support rural farming.

Problems

- Kennedy was killed before he could fulfil his promises.
- Kennedy involved America more deeply in the Cold War and Vietnam War.

The Great Society (LBJ)



Successes:

- The Economic Opportunity Act, 1964 – provided training for disadvantaged youths.
- Medicare and Medicaid, 1965 – provided medical insurance for the poor and elderly.
- The Civil Rights Act, 1964 – made it illegal for local government to discriminate in things such as housing and jobs. This was extended with the 1968 Civil Rights Act.
- Voting Rights Act, 1965 – This prevented local government from preventing African Americans from voting.

Problems

- Johnsons reforms cost a lot of money.
- Republicans did not like the restraints on personal freedom.
- Johnsons work at home was overshadowed by the increased deaths and involvement in the Vietnam War.

Time of change

The 1960s and 70s were also a time of change for attitudes towards women, running alongside the anti-Vietnam war and civil rights movements. Betty Friedan wrote a very influential book called ‘The Feminine Mystique’ that was published in 1963. Friedan criticised the assumption that women would be fulfilled by marriage, housework and raising children. She believed women needed more opportunities, like they had during the Second World War and that many women were unhappy with their lives but felt they couldn’t express this. The phrase ‘women’s liberation’ began to be used to refer to women being freed from the restrictions that had been placed on them for so long.