

Focused Learning Lesson
Analyzing the economic, political, social, and cultural transformation of the
United States since World War II
American History
Grade Level: 11th
H-1B-H15

Overview:

In this focused learning lesson, students will use various chart and documents to compare and study life in the 1940's and 50's to life today. Students will examine various areas have changed including the economy, government, civil rights, sports, and education. This lesson is intended to be a higher order thinking activity that allows students to think about how different their life would be if they had lived fifty years ago.

Approximate Duration:

45 Minutes

Benchmarks with GLEs:

H-1B-H15 – Analyzing the economic, political, social, and cultural transformation of the US since World War II

GLEs:

47. Explain the impact of post-World War II domestic policies on life in the United States (e.g., the Great Society).
48. Identify the primary leaders of the Civil Rights Movement and describe major issues and accomplishments.
49. Describe the effects of Watergate on the United States and its political system
50. Identify and describe the social and cultural changes from the 1960s to the present (e.g., Women's Movement).
51. Evaluate various means of achieving equality of political rights (e.g., civil disobedience vs. violent protest).

Objectives:

1. Compare current events and actions with various events and actions over the past fifty years
2. Predict possible outcomes and trends using supporting data and documentation

Teacher Preparation:

- Read *Teacher Attachment 1*
- Review *Teacher Attachment 2*
- Make copies of *Student Attachment 1*

Materials/Equipment/Resources:

- Pen or pencils
- Copies of the attached students sheets for each student or group
- Class set of American History textbooks for reference

- Optional – Computer resources for additional research

Lesson Procedures:

Set or Opener

After a brief class discussion, the teacher should open this lesson with a brief discussion with students about the changes that have occurred in the United States over the past fifty years. A good method for doing this is to ask students how their lives are different now compared to their parents or grandparent's childhood. Many of the events covered by this benchmark are very memorable to the parents and grandparents who experienced them. Students have probably heard stories and events retold by their relatives that will serve as a background for this introduction. Also, the age of television, which has taken place since the 1950's, has allowed students to see firsthand the events and accounts of our nation.

A good introduction to this lesson can be a simple "bell ringer" question such as "How was your childhood different from that of your parents or grandparents?" Lead a class discussion on some of the points that students make. Use this time to assess prior knowledge of the subject.

Body of the Lesson

Give each student or group a copy of *Student Attachment 1*. Go over the instructions with the students and explain that they will be reading and analyzing charts and documents in this lesson. They must read the directions and answer the questions that follow each lesson set. Allow the students to begin and monitor their progress for 15-30 minutes.

Closure

Once students have completed the activity, have them compare their answers with classmates or other groups. Once the students have shared their answers, go over each answer and discuss how they arrived at their conclusions. Be sure to take your time and question students on some of the major topics that were covered with the charts and documents. Have students correct their answers and keep the handouts for future reference.

Activities and Handouts:

- **Teacher Attachment 1** - *Teacher Notes*
- **Teacher Attachment 2** - *Teacher Resources*
- **Student Attachment 1** – *COMPARING THE UNITED STATES TODAY WITH THE*

UNITED STATES AFTER WORLD WAR II

Assessment Items:

- See *Student Attachment 1* and *Teacher Attachment 2* (Optional Activities)

Reference Links and Technology Connections:

- See *Teacher Master 1* and *2*

TEACHER NOTES

- This lesson is intended to open a dialogue with students by using charts and graph interpretations, and to allow students to use critical thinking skills to compare historical and current events using prior knowledge and provided document prompts.
- This lesson should be used as a way to discuss some of the major issues of the United States between World War II and today. Use this activity and your discussion with students to evaluate what knowledge they have of the changes that have occurred in the United States over the past fifty years.
- It is highly encouraged to discuss other points not discussed in this lesson and allow students to ask questions not completely associated with the exact lesson in an attempt to encourage teachable moments.

ANSWER KEY

1. In 1995, how much money did you need to spend to have the buying power of \$1.00 in 1945? \$8.47
2. What do you think accounted for the difference in price between 1935 and 1955? World War II, Great Depression, or other possible factors that students may list
3. Looking at the changes in the chart over time, what would you predict the \$1.00 in 1945 would be worth in 2015? *This is an opinion question; make sure you know the reason why students chose the amount...make sure it is a rational answer.*
4. In what year did the Democratic Party win major victories across the United States? 1936
5. What years show a large amount of national division between the presidential candidates 1976 and 2000?
6. Looking at Louisiana in all of the above presidential elections, what trend has developed in regards to Louisiana voters in presidential elections? *Louisiana citizens are voting more for Republican candidates in presidential elections. You may discuss with students that, even if Louisiana may vote for the Republican presidential candidates, Democrats hold the majority of offices. Both of our US senators are Democrats.*

7. What amendment was used to say that African-American students rights were not being “equally protected?” 14th Amendment
8. What idea did the court case Plessy vs. Ferguson establish? “Separate but equal”
9. Did the Supreme Court feel that African-American children were not being treated fairly? Yes, and in Brown vs. Board of Education, the Supreme Court states that Separate was unequal.
10. In a paragraph below, what do you think are the strengths of having a school that is desegregated? In your opinion, how has desegregation allowed us all to benefit? Various opinions...check for student thinking skills
11. What year has the highest percentage of college graduates? 1980
12. What year has the highest percentage of high school dropouts? 1950
13. If you were to predict the percentage of people today with high school diplomas, what would that percentage be? In a paragraph, discuss why you feel it would be that percentage? Various opinions...check for student thinking skills.

TEACHER RESOURCES

WEBSITES

<http://woodrow.mpls.frb.fed.us/research/data/us/calc/> - Great historical money conversion link

<http://clerkweb.house.gov/members/congProfile.php> - Good government resource site

<http://www.presidenelect.org> – Great site for Presidential election history

<http://www.ssdan.net/chip/modules/carlson/carlson1.html> - Family change data

<http://americanhistory.si.edu/> - Virtual American History museum

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/today/today.html> - Today in History site sponsored by the Library of Congress

<http://search.eb.com/women/> - Women in US history site.

<http://www.cah.utexas.edu/> - African-American History Site

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Have students interview a family member who is over forty years old about how his/her life has changed. Have the students write an essay about how their relatives' lives were different.
- Using the internet and the resource links, have students research pictures from the past fifty years and create a collage which represents how America has changed over that time period.
- Using a textbook, have student look at the chapters that deal with the past fifty years and, in groups, have them create quiz questions about assigned topics. Examples of this would be to have a group create quiz questions about the American economy over the past fifty years, or sports over the past fifty years. After the questions are complete, have the groups switch questions and answer the quiz. Once all of the groups have participated in the quizzes, have each group present the answers and discuss the events.

COMPARING THE UNITED STATES TODAY WITH THE UNITED STATES AFTER WORLD WAR II

INSTRUCTION: Using the following information below answer the corresponding questions.

QUESTION SET 1 - The chart below is an example of how the value of money can increase or decrease according to the current economic situation of the country. Look at the chart and answer the questions below.

One dollar in 1945	Equivalent buying power in various years
\$1.00 in 1945 would be worth.....	\$13.42 in 1935
\$1.00 in 1945 would be worth.....	\$1.00 in 1945
\$1.00 in 1945 would be worth.....	\$1.49 in 1955
\$1.00 in 1945 would be worth.....	\$1.75 in 1965
\$1.00 in 1945 would be worth.....	\$2.99 in 1975
\$1.00 in 1945 would be worth.....	\$5.98 in 1985
\$1.00 in 1945 would be worth.....	\$8.47 in 1995
\$1.00 in 1945 would be worth.....	\$10.21 in 2003

Information came from the following
 site*<http://woodrow.mpls.frb.fed.us/research/data/us/calc/>

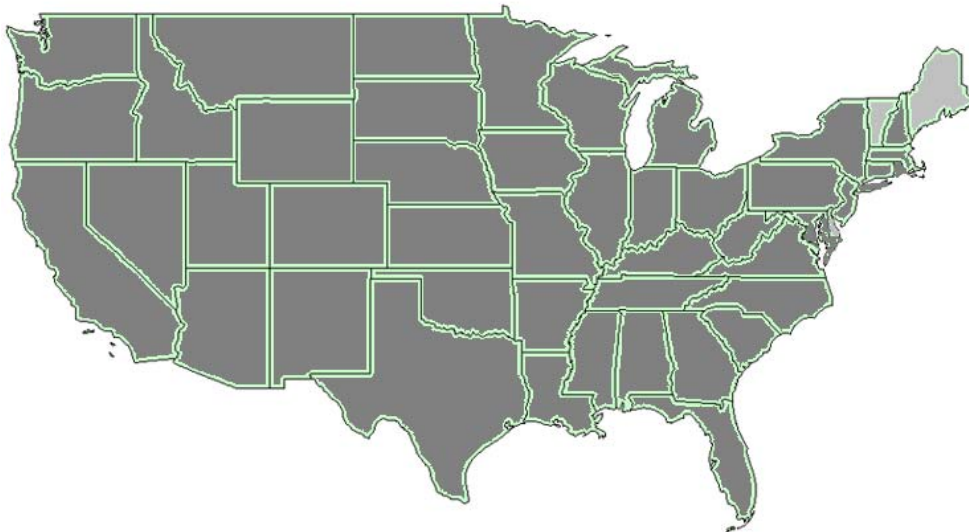
- In 1995, how much money did you need to spend to have the buying power of \$1.00 in 1945?
- What do you think accounted for the difference in price between 1935 and 1955?
- Looking at the changes in the chart over time, what would you predict the \$1.00 in 1945 would be worth in 2015?

QUESTION SET 2 - The maps below show which presidential candidate won each state during their elections. Use the information to answer the questions.

Information and visuals by <http://www.presidentelect.org>

- In what year did the Democratic Party win major victories across the United States?
- What years show a large amount of national division between the presidential candidates?
- Looking at Louisiana in all of the illustrated presidential elections, what trend has developed in regards to Louisiana voters in presidential elections?

ELECTION MAP FROM THE 1936 ELECTION

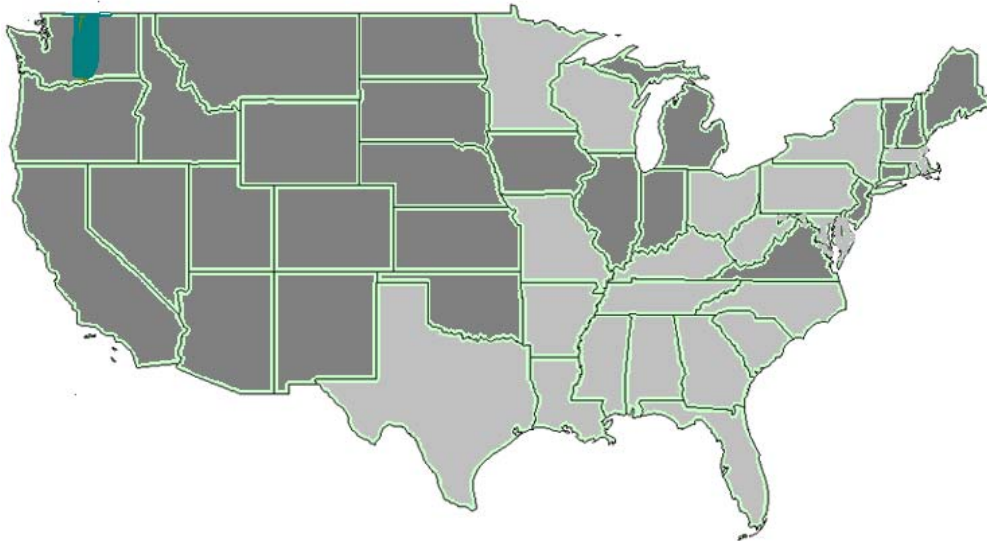


ROOSEVELT-523

LANDON-8

1936		
AL	KY	ND
AK	LA	OH
AZ	ME	OK
AR	MD	OR
CA	MA	PA
CO	MI	RI
CT	MN	SC
DE	MS	SD
DC	MO	TN
FL	MT	TX
GA	NE	UT
HI	NV	VT
ID	NH	VA
IL	NJ	WA
IN	NM	WV
IA	NY	WI
KS	NC	WY

ELECTION MAP FROM THE 1976 ELECTION



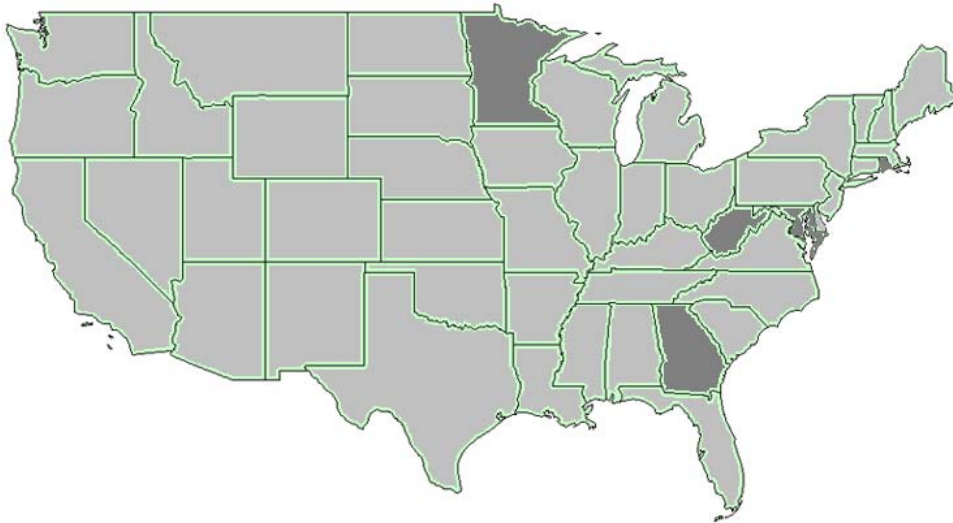
1976		
AL	KY	ND
AK	LA	OH
AZ	ME	OK
AR	MD	OR
CA	MA	PA
CO	MI	RI
CT	MN	SC
DE	MS	SD
DC	MO	TN
FL	MT	TX
GA	NE	UT
HI	NV	VT
ID	NH	VA
IL	NJ	WA
IN	NM	WV
IA	NY	WI
KS	NC	WY

CARTER-297

FORD-240

REAGAN-1

ELECTION MAP FROM THE 1980 ELECTION

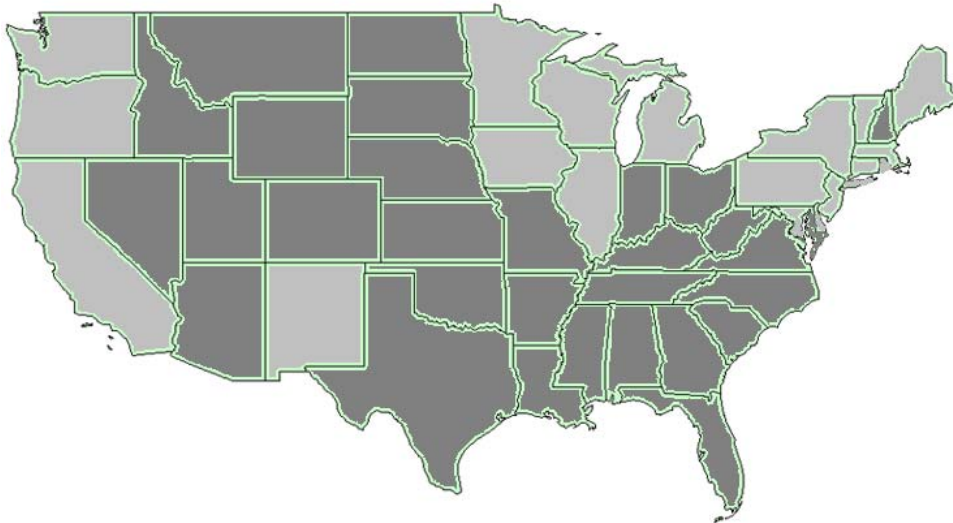


REAGAN- 489

CARTER- 49

1980		
AL	KY	ND
AK	LA	OH
AZ	ME	OK
AR	MD	OR
CA	MA	PA
CO	MI	RI
CT	MN	SC
DE	MS	SD
DC	MO	TN
FL	MT	TX
GA	NE	UT
HI	NV	VT
ID	NH	VA
IL	NJ	WA
IN	NM	WV
IA	NY	WI
KS	NC	WY

ELECTION MAP FROM THE 2000 ELECTION



BUSH- 271

GORE-266

2000		
AL	KY	ND
AK	LA	OH
AZ	ME	OK
AR	MD	OR
CA	MA	PA
CO	MI	RI
CT	MN	SC
DE	MS	SD
DC	MO	TN
FL	MT	TX
GA	NE	UT
HI	NV	VT
ID	NH	VA
IL	NJ	WA
IN	NM	WV
IA	NY	WI
KS	NC	WY

QUESTION SET 3 - The excerpt on the next page is from Supreme Court case *Brown v. Board of Education*, (1954). This case was the landmark decision that would change the United States and in the long term create a greater opportunity for equality among citizens but in the short term it led to a great struggle for civil rights in which individuals and states would be forced to endure situations of unrest and conflict. Read the court's decision on the following page and answer on the questions below.

- What amendment was used to say that African-American students' rights were not being "equally protected?"
- What idea did the court case *Plessy vs. Ferguson* establish?
- Did the Supreme Court feel that African-American children were not being treated fairly?
- In a paragraph below, write what you think are the strengths of having a school that is desegregated? In your opinion, has desegregation allowed us all to benefit?

Brown v. Board of Education, 347 U.S. 483 (1954) (USSC)

Excerpt

MR. CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN delivered the opinion of the Court.

In each of the cases, minors of the Negro race, through their legal representatives, seek the aid of the courts in obtaining admission to the public schools of their community on a nonsegregated basis. In each instance, they had been denied admission to schools attended by white children under laws requiring or permitting segregation according to race. This segregation was alleged to deprive the plaintiffs of the equal protection of the laws under the Fourteenth Amendment. In each of the cases other than the Delaware case, a three-judge federal district court denied relief to the plaintiffs on the so-called "separate but equal" doctrine announced by this Court in **Plessy v. Ferguson, 163 U.S. 537**. Under that doctrine, equality of treatment is accorded when the races are provided substantially equal facilities, even though these facilities are separate. In the Delaware case, the Supreme Court of Delaware adhered to that doctrine, but ordered that the plaintiffs be admitted to the white schools because of their superiority to the Negro schools... Today, education is perhaps the most important function of state and local governments. Compulsory school attendance laws and the great expenditures for education both demonstrate our recognition of the importance of education to our democratic society. It is required in the performance of our most basic public responsibilities, even service in the armed forces. It is the very foundation of good citizenship. Today it is a principal instrument in awakening the child to cultural values, in preparing him for later professional training, and in helping him to adjust normally to his environment. In these days, it is doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if he is denied the opportunity of an education. Such an opportunity, where the state has undertaken to provide it, is a right, which must be made available to all on equal terms. We come then to the question presented: Does segregation of children in public schools solely on the basis of race, even though the physical facilities and other "tangible" factors may be equal, deprive the children of the minority group of equal educational opportunities? We believe that it does... Segregation of white and colored children in public schools has a detrimental effect upon the colored children. The impact is greater when it has the sanction of the law, for the policy of separating the races is usually interpreted as denoting the inferiority of the negro group. A sense of inferiority affects the motivation of a child to learn. Segregation with the sanction of law, therefore, has a tendency to [retard] the educational and mental development of negro children and to deprive them of some of the benefits they would receive in a racial[ly] integrated school system....

QUESTION SET 4 – The chart below shows how education has changed between 1950 and 1980. Use the information on the chart to answer the following question

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT BY YEAR: 1950-1980

	NO HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA	HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA	COLLEGE DEGREE	TOTAL
1980	33.5%	50.2%	16.2%	13274
1970	47.6	41.8	10.6	10941
1960	59.0	33.4	7.6	9955
1950	65.8	28.0	6.2	8711
ALL	49.6	39.6	10.8	42881

*<http://www.ssdan.net/chip/modules/carlson/carlson1.html>

- What year has the highest percentage of college graduates?
- What year has the highest percentage of high school dropouts
- If you were to predict the percentage of people today with high school degrees, what would that percentage be? In a paragraph, discuss why you feel it would be that percentage.