Period 8: 1945-1980

In a Nutshell
After World War II, the United States grappled with prosperity and unfamiliar international responsibilities while struggling to live up to its ideals.

Key Concepts
Part 1
A. The United States responded to an uncertain and unstable postwar world by asserting and working to maintain a position of global leadership, with far-reaching domestic and international consequences.

B. United States policymakers engaged in a Cold War with the authoritarian Soviet Union, seeking to limit the growth of Communist military power and ideological influence, create a free-market global economy, and build an international security system.

C. Cold War policies led to public debates over the power of the federal government and acceptable means for pursuing international and domestic goals while protecting civil liberties.

Part 2
D. New movements for civil rights and liberal efforts to expand the role of government generated a range of political and cultural responses.

E. Seeking to fulfill Reconstruction-era promises, civil rights activists and political leaders achieved some legal and political successes in ending segregation, although progress toward racial equality was slow.

F. Responding to social conditions and the African American civil rights movement, a variety of movements emerged that focused on issues of identity, social justice, and the environment.

G. Liberalism influenced postwar politics and court decisions, but it came under increasing attack from the left as well as from a resurgent conservative movement.

Part 3
H. Postwar economic and demographic changes had far-reaching consequences for American society, politics, and culture.

I. Rapid economic and social changes in American society fostered a sense of optimism in the postwar years.

J. New demographic and social developments, along with anxieties over the Cold War, changed U.S. culture and led to significant political and moral debates that sharply divided the nation.

Significant Topics

1. **U.S. Foreign Policy after World War II**

   As postwar tensions dissolved the wartime alliance between Western democracies and the Soviet Union, the United States developed a foreign policy based on collective security, international aid, and economic institutions that bolstered non-Communist nations. The Cold War fluctuated between periods of direct and indirect military confrontation and periods of mutual coexistence (or détente). Americans debated the merits of a large nuclear arsenal, the military-industrial complex, and the appropriate power of the executive branch in conducting foreign and military policy.

   a. United Nations, 1945

   b. Cold War, 1945-1991

   c. Iron Curtain

   d. containment

   e. Truman Doctrine, 1947

   f. National Security Council, 1947

   g. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), 1947

   h. Marshall Plan, 1948

i. Berlin airlift, 1948

j. North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), 1949

k. development of the hydrogen bomb, 1952

l. New Look, 1955

m. massive retaliation

n. brinkmanship

o. Sputnik I, 1957

p. space race

q. Nikita Khruschev

r. peaceful coexistence

s. flexible response

t. Limited Test Ban Treaty, 1963

u. Nixon Doctrine

v. détente

w. Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty I (SALT I), 1972

x. Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty II (SALT II), 1979

y. Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan, 1979

2. **The Red Scare**
    Americans debated policies and methods designed to expose suspected communists within the
    United States even as both parties supported the broader strategy of containing communism.

    a. fellow-traveler

    b. House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC)

    c. Alger Hiss

d. McCarran Internal Security Act, 1950

e. McCarran-Walter Act, 1952

f. Julius and Ethel Rosenberg

g. Joseph McCarthy

h. McCarthyism

i. Army-McCarthy Hearings, 1954

3. **Decolonization and the Spread of Nationalism**
Postwar decolonization and the emergence of powerful nationalist movements in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East led both sides in the Cold War to seek allies among new nations, many of which remained nonaligned.

a. Chinese Civil War

b. Mohammed Mossadegh

c. Gamal Abdel Nasser

4. **The U.S. and Latin America**
Cold War competition extended to Latin America, where the U.S. supported non-Communist regimes that had varying levels of commitment to democracy.

a.   Organization of American States, 1948

b.   Alliance for Progress, 1961

c.   Bay of Pigs, 1961

d.   Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962

e.   Mann Doctrine, 1964

f.   U.S. Occupation of the Dominican Republic, 1965

g.   Salvador Allende

h.   Panama Canal Treaty, 1977

i.   Sandinista Liberation Front

5. **War in Southeast Asia — Korea and Vietnam**
    Concerned by expansionist Communist ideology and Soviet repression, the United States sought to
    contain communism through a variety of measures, including major military engagements in Korea
    and Vietnam. Although anticommunist foreign policy faced little domestic opposition in previous years,
    the Vietnam War inspired sizable and passionate antiwar protests that became more numerous as
    the war escalated, and sometimes led to violence.

a. Korean War, 1950-53

b. Vietnam, 1954-1961 (Eisenhower Administration)

c. Ho Chi Minh

d. domino theory

e. Vietnam, 1961-1963 (Kennedy Administration)

f. Tonkin Gulf Resolution, 1964

g. Vietnam, 1965-1969 (Johnson Administration)

h. Vietcong

i. Tet Offensive, 1968

j. Eugene McCarthy

k. Robert Kennedy

    l.   My Lai, 1968

    m. Vietnam War, 1969-1973 (Nixon Administration)

    n.   Vietnamization, 1969-1973

    o.   U.S. withdrawal from South Vietnam, 1973

    p.   War Powers Act, 1973

    q.   Fall of South Vietnam, 1975

    r.   Students for a Democratic Society, 1960

    s.   Kent State, 1970

    t.   Pentagon Papers, 1971

6. **The U.S. and the Middle East**
   Ideological, military, and economic concerns shaped U.S. involvement in the Middle East, with
   several oil crises in the region eventually sparking attempts at creating a national energy policy.

   a. Palestine, 1948

b. Suez Crisis, 1956

c. Eisenhower Doctrine

d. Yom Kippur War, 1973

e. Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)

f. Camp David Accords, 1979

g. mujahedeen

h. Carter Doctrine, 1979

7. **The Civil Rights Movement**
    During and after World War II, civil rights activists and leaders, most notably Martin Luther King Jr.,
    combatted racial discrimination utilizing a variety of strategies, including legal challenges, direct
    action, and nonviolent protest tactics. The three branches of the federal government used measures
    including desegregation of the armed services, *Brown v. Board of Education*, and the Civil Rights Act
    of 1964 to promote greater racial equality. Continuing resistance slowed efforts at desegregation,
    sparking social and political unrest across the nation. Debates among civil rights activists over the
    efficacy of nonviolence increased after 1965.

    a. Desegregation of the Armed Services, 1948

    b. *Brown v. Board of Education*, 1954

c. Southern Manifesto, 1954

d. Rosa Parks

e. Martin Luther King, Jr.

f. Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), 1957

g. Civil Rights Act of 1957

h. Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), 1960

i. sit-in

j. freedom rides, 1961

k. public order laws

l. James Meredith

m. March on Washington, 1963

n. Freedom Summer, 1964

o. Civil Rights Act of 1964

p. March from Selma to Montgomery, 1965

q. Voting Rights Act of 1965

r. Watts, 1965

s. Black Power

t. Nation of Islam (Black Muslims)

u. Malcolm X

v. Black Panthers

w. race riots, 1968

       x.   George Wallace

8. **The Rights Revolution**
Feminist and gay and lesbian activists mobilized behind claims for legal, economic,and social equality. Latino, American Indian, and Asian American movements continued to demand social and economic equality and a redress of past injustices.

    a.   American GI Forum, 1948

    b.   *The Feminine Mystique*, 1963

    c.   Equal Pay Act, 1963

    d.   Title VII, 1964

    e.   National Organization for Women (NOW), 1966

    f.   Stonewall Riot, 1969

    g.   Equal Rights Amendment, 1972

    h.   Chicano Movement

    i.   César Chávez

    j.   American Indian Movement (AIM), 1968

    k.   Russell Means

    l.   Alcatraz, 1969

    m.   Wounded Knee, 1973

    n.   Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act, 1974

9. **1960s Liberalism and The War on Poverty**
Despite an overall affluence in postwar America, many people raised concerns about the prevalence and persistence of poverty as a national problem. Liberalism, based on anticommunism abroad and a firm belief in the efficacy of government power to achieve social goals at home, reached a high point of political influence by the mid-1960s. Liberal ideas found expression in Lyndon Johnson's Great Society, which attempted to use federal legislation and programs to end racial discrimination, eliminate poverty, and address other social issues. A series of Supreme Court decisions expanded civil rights and individual liberties.

    a.   *Baker v. Carr*, 1962

    b.   *Engel v. Vitale*, 1962

    c.   *Gideon v. Wainwright*, 1963

d. Lyndon Johnson's Great Society, 1964

e. War on Poverty, 1964

f. Medicaid, 1965

g. Medicare, 1965

h. *Griswold v. Connecticut*, 1965

i. *Miranda v. Arizona*, 1966

10. **Post-War Economic Prosperity**
    A burgeoning private sector, federal spending, the baby boom, and technological developments
    helped spur economic growth. As higher education opportunities and new technologies rapidly
    expanded, increasing social mobility encouraged the migration of the middle class to the suburbs and
    of many Americans to the South and West. The Sun Belt region emerged as a significant political and
    economic force.

    a. GI Bill of Rights, 1954

    b. National Defense Student Loans, 1958

    c. Sun Belt

11. **Immigration**
Immigrants from around the world sought access to the political, social, and economic opportunities in the United States, especially after the passage of new immigration laws in 1965.

   a. Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965

12. **The Environmental Movement**
Environmental problems and accidents led to a growing environmental movement that aimed to use legislative and public efforts to combat pollution and protect natural resources. The federal government established new environmental programs and regulations.

   a. Silent Spring, 1962

   b. Earth Day, 1970

   c. Environmental Protection Agency, 1970

   d. Clean Air Act, 1970

   e. Three Mile Island, 1979

13. **Post-World War II Culture and Society**
Mass culture became increasingly homogeneous in the postwar years, inspiring challenges to conformity by artists, intellectuals, and rebellious youth. Feminists and young people who participated in the counterculture of the 1960s rejected many of the social, economic, and political values of their parents' generation, introduced greater informality into U.S. culture, and advocated changes in sexual norms.

   a. baby boom

b. Beats

c. rock and roll

d. counterculture (hippies)

e. Woodstock, 1969

14. **Attacks on 1960s Liberalism and the Rise of Conservatism**
Some groups on the left rejected liberal policies, arguing that political leaders did too little to transform the racial and economic status quo at home and pursued immoral policies abroad. Conservatives also challenged liberal laws and court decisions and perceived moral and cultural decline, seeking to limit the role of the federal government and enact more assertive foreign policies. The 1970s saw growing clashes between conservatives and liberals over social and cultural issues, the power of the federal government, race, and movements for greater individual rights. The rapid and substantial growth of evangelical Christian churches and organizations was accompanied by greater political and social activism on the part of religious conservatives.

a. Students for a Democratic Society

b. Berkeley Free Speech Movement, 1964-1965

c. New Right

d. southern strategy

e.   Watergate, 1972

f.   *Roe v. Wade*, 1973

g.   Right-to-Life Movement

h.   Proposition 13, 1978

i.   *Bakke v. University of California*, 1978

j.   Phyllis Schlafly

k.   Focus on the Family, 1977

l.   Moral Majority, 1979

15. **The Malaise of the Late 1970s**
Public confidence and trust in government's ability to solve social and economic problems declined in the 1970s in the wake of economic challenges, political scandals, and foreign policy crises.

a.   energy crisis

b.   stagflation

c.   Carter's "Malaise" speech, 1979

d.   Iranian hostage crisis, 1979