

INTRODUCTION

This unit examines the tensions of the cold war era, reflected in dichotomies: a growing suburban, white middle class and increasingly ghettoized blacks and Latinos; a faith in scientific progress contrasted with a fear of the bomb; and an idealization of individualism tempered by an anti-communist call for conformity. Individuals and groups raised their expectations for equality as veterans returned from the global conflict of World War II.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

In this session, teachers will

- learn about domestic prosperity, internal migration, and major scientific and medical breakthroughs by exploring the aftermath of World War II;
- be able to identify how the use of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki created fear in Americans about mass destruction;
- learn how the aftermath of World War II and the proliferation of nuclear weapons increased American efforts to combat communist influences at home and abroad;
- learn how the 1940s and 1950s allowed a growing middle class to attain the American Dream, while at the same time many in the United States were denied access to the same opportunities.

Before You Begin

Before the day of the workshop session, familiarize yourself with the reading materials assigned to the participating teachers. Review this facilitator's guide. Be sure to prepare the correct number of overheads and handouts needed for each activity. Each participant should read the text materials for the unit before attending the workshop (estimated reading time: two hours), and should bring these materials with them to the workshop session. Activities during the session will draw heavily on the content in the text materials, as well as the video.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- This *America's History in the Making* facilitator's guide
- Text Materials for Unit 19: *Postwar Tension and Triumph*
- VHS tape and VCR, DVD and DVD player, or access to streaming video of *America's History in the Making* video for Unit 19: *Postwar Tension and Triumph* available at www.learner.org

- Overhead projector and colored pens
- Multiple copies of handouts (in the Appendix of this guide)
- Pens and paper for participating teachers and facilitator
- Chalkboard, blank transparencies, or overhead for reporting out

OVERHEAD AND HANDOUT INSTRUCTIONS

1. Using Appendix A, “Themes for *Postwar Tension and Triumph*,” create an overhead transparency.
2. Using Appendix B, “Postwar America Graphic Organizer,” create an overhead transparency, as well as one copy for each participant.
3. Using Appendix C, “Letter to the Editor of the *Pittsburg Courier*,” make one copy for each participant.
4. Using Appendix D, “The Double V and the Black Press,” create an overhead transparency.
5. Using Appendix E, “Questions About the Black Press,” create an overhead transparency.
6. Using Appendix F, “Content Knowledge Assessment Scoring Guide,” create an overhead transparency.

Facilitator’s Note: You may want to prepare overheads of the reflection questions for teachers to reference during the workshop activities.

LEADING THE SESSION

As participating teachers arrive, have an overhead set up that lists the main themes of the unit for teachers to review (Appendix A).

After you have completed any housekeeping announcements, ask one of the teachers to read the themes aloud. Explain that they will expand their understanding of these three themes through activities and video segments that build on the reading they did prior to the workshop meeting.

Warm-up and Activity 1 (45 minutes)

This activity serves as an icebreaker for the group, and it helps participants review ideas from the reading. In the warm-up, participants will consider one of the main themes for the unit — the changing social climate in post-World War II America. Teachers should draw on the reading for the unit as well as their previous knowledge of the era to complete the warm-up brainstorming and activity.

Warm-up (10 minutes)

Ask teachers to brainstorm a list of changes that occurred in American society during World War II and its aftermath. To encourage this brainstorm, prompt the teachers to consider areas of society such as gender roles, domestic policies, international relations, and the social standings of diverse American citizens. After a list is generated, have the teachers discuss possible reasons why World War II affected these changes. How does learning about social and political shifts enhance our understanding of American life in the aftermath of World War II?

Part 1 (20 minutes)

Put a copy of the “Postwar America Graphic Organizer” (Appendix B) on the overhead and distribute one copy to each teacher. Divide the teachers into four groups.

Ask the teachers to use the graphic organizer to track information about some of the events occurring during the postwar era. When completing the “Changes in American Society” section, encourage the teachers to consider big ideas that they know about this historical era. When completing the “Examples of These Changes” column, teachers can use what they read for session preparation as well as any other sources that they have read, viewed, studied, or taught previously to target specific events relating to larger societal trends. Ask the participants to be sure that they consider how the primary documents presented in the text provide important information for both of the sections on the graphic organizer.

- Ask the first group to identify changes that occurred in American society related to “Patterns of Internal Migration After World War II,” and then to record at least one example of how such internal migration specifically impacted American society. Encourage the teachers to consider movement of Americans resulting from the Sun Belt phenomenon, as well as movement away from the inner city. Also, remind them to consider Americans who could not move and did not have access to the suburbs.
- Ask the second group to identify changes that occurred in American society related to “Economic Prosperity After the War” (during the aftermath of World War II), and then to come up with at least one example of the impact of economic prosperity on American society.

- Ask the third group to identify changes that occurred in American society related to “Red Scare Paranoia” during the cold war, and then to come up with at least one example of paranoia from the Red Scare on society. Encourage the teachers to think beyond communism as an ideology, and to recall how this paranoia was promoted by the FBI and the House Committee on Un-American Activities. Also, encourage teachers to consider the impact of the Red Scare on American individualism.
- Ask the fourth group to identify changes that occurred in American society related to “Scientific Discovery” during the decades following World War II, and then to come up with at least one example of how these discoveries impacted American society. Encourage teachers to consider nuclear proliferation, wonder drugs, and other medical and technological advancements that occurred during this time.

Part 2 (10 minutes)

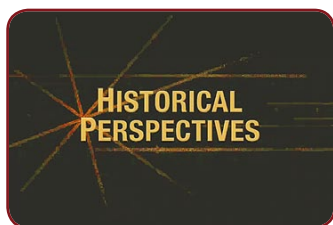
Have each group report to the large group their responses for Part 1. Note each group’s input on the overhead, and have teachers record the information on their individual copies of the organizer. After each group presents, the other teachers should be encouraged to add any additional ideas they have to the appropriate column.

Part 3 (5 minutes)

Allow teachers to share their responses to the following reflection questions with the group:

Reflection Questions

1. What are some commonly held myths that have been dispelled for you about post-World War II America?
2. How did nuclear weapons facilitate fear about the spread of communism?
3. How were some citizens prevented from attaining the American Dream?



Watch Video Segment 1:
Historical Perspectives (approximately 10 minutes)

Activity 2 (45 minutes)

This activity will help teachers understand social changes that were occurring in the United States during World War II. After viewing a graphic illustration, the teachers will conceptualize (and, if time allows, produce) an editorial cartoon about the Black press and/or the Double V movement initiated during the war. Remind the participants that editorial cartoons represent news events and societal trends in pictorial form. They are allegorical, and items in the cartoons are often symbolic. The teachers may rely on widely used symbolism (e.g., donkeys for Democrats, bears for falling stock markets), or develop their own. This is yet another way to see beyond specific events and people to delve more deeply into the impact of an historical event. Editorial cartoons require skills in inference and interpretation of source materials. Teachers should rely on material from the video and the readings to complete this activity. They should be encouraged to refer to the text materials as a resource.

Part 1 (20 minutes)

Hand out copies of “Letter to the Editor of the *Pittsburgh Courier*” (Appendix C). Allow five minutes for teachers to read the letter.

Put up the overhead of the Double V insignia (Appendix D), and as a large group discuss the historical events related to them.

After the teachers have finished discussing the letter and the insignia, place “Questions About the Black Press” (Appendix E) on the overhead for whole-group discussion.

- What issues did the Black press explore in the decades leading up to and following World War II?
- What was a role assumed by the Black press during World War II? What were the causes which this press focused on during the war?
- How should the Double V campaign be remembered in terms of its success in helping African American soldiers returning to the states after the war?

Part 2 (20 minutes)

Place teachers in pairs and have them conceptualize a possible editorial cartoon representing their answer to one of the above three questions. For example, they may focus on a cartoon about the formation and purpose of the Black press; or they may focus on the Double V insignia; or they may examine the opportunities made available to returning African American veterans. Remind the teachers that political cartoons are allegorical, and that images depicted in the cartoon should be symbolic. If the teachers have time, encourage them to sketch their cartoons, with dialogue balloons and/or a caption.

Have each pair share the main idea and the symbolism represented in their cartoon concept. If they sketched a cartoon, be sure the teachers share this as well.

Part 3 (5 minutes)

Have teachers share their responses to the following reflection question:

Reflection Question

How can you use historical editorial cartoons and student-created editorial cartoons to supplement your students' understanding of stories about American history?



Watch Video Segment 2:
Faces of America (approximately 10 minutes)

Activity 3 (15 minutes)

The goal of this activity is to explore the contributions of the three Americans portrayed in the Faces of America video. Teachers should rely on material from the video and the readings to complete this activity. They should be encouraged to refer to the text materials as a resource.

Part 1 (10 minutes)

Have the teachers recall the contributions by Oppenheimer and Carson that were initially embraced by their respective scientific communities (Oppenheimer in physics, Carson in biology and as an environmental writer).

Ask the teachers the following questions:

1. Why were Oppenheimer and Carson later shunned and/or criticized?
2. What are examples today of people being shunned for making policy recommendations that differ from majority opinions? How are today's examples similar and different from the experiences of Oppenheimer and Carson?

Part 2 (5 minutes)

Have teachers share their responses to the following reflection questions:

Reflection Questions

1. Oppenheimer and Carson have stories that are very unique to this period of American history (World War II and/or its aftermath). How can exploring their lives help your students understand this period better?
2. In a postwar era tainted by government suspicion, the outspokenness of scientists Carson and Oppenheimer caused an immediate backlash. How do their experiences differ from that of Navajo code talker Keith Little in the decades that followed the war? What commonalities do they share?



Watch Video Segment 3: Hands on History

(approximately 5 minutes to the end of the tape)

Activity 4 (20 minutes)

This activity serves as a conclusion to this session of the workshop. It will provide an opportunity to reflect on the video segment, and on the content from the session.

Part 1 (10 minutes)

Tell the participants that, in the 1950s, hot rods represented a non-conformist subculture that derived from the rapidly emerging “car culture.”

Ask the whole group of participants to brainstorm reasons why the car culture was an expression of optimism, individualism, and creativity—and a celebration of consumerism, affluence and freedom. What did the car offer?

Discuss with the group the following questions:

1. How did Eisenhower’s Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 promote the car culture? Consider how returning GIs’ mechanical skills, free time, disposable income, and a growing ideal of individualization also added to the car culture.
2. What other factors were at play that promoted individuals to travel?

Part 2 (10 minutes)

In this unit, participants examined post-World War II America and the tensions of the cold war era reflected in the following dichotomies: a growing suburban, white, middle class and increasingly ghettoized blacks and Latinos; and a faith in scientific progress contrasted with a fear of the bomb. Individuals and groups raised their expectations for equality as veterans returned from the global conflict of World War II.

This final activity serves as a conclusion to this session of the workshop. It provides participants an opportunity to reflect on what they have learned from the text and the workshop activities. This activity also reviews the Scoring Guide, which participants will use to assess their understanding of the content and historical thinking skills learned in this unit.

In previous activities, participants worked either in small groups or with the full group to complete the activities. For this activity, participants should work alone to reflect on what they’ve learned and then write their answers on paper (or type them on a computer). This final activity also models the type of assessment that the participants will be required to take to receive credit for the course.

Direct them with the following statements:

1. What primary sources would you use to help analyze the theme: “World War II and its aftermath ushered in an era of domestic prosperity—a huge baby boom, internal migration, and major scientific and medical breakthroughs”?
2. On the same page, describe what historical thinking skills you used in your analysis. What specific aspects of the artifact helped you understand the theme better?

As a whole group, look at the criteria for full credit on the Content Knowledge Assessment Scoring Guide (Appendix F). Ask participants to review what they wrote and share the types of answers that they believe will result in a score of 3 or 4.

APPENDICES – *Postwar Tension and Triumph*

- A: “Themes for *Postwar Tension and Triumph*”
overhead transparency
- B: “Postwar America Graphic Organizer”
overhead transparency; one handout for each participant
- C: “Letter to the Editor of the *Pittsburgh Courier*”
one handout for each participant
- D: “The Double V and the Black Press”
overhead transparency
- E: “Questions About the Black Press”
overhead transparency
- F: “Content Knowledge Assessment Scoring Guide”
overhead transparency

Appendix A: Themes for *Postwar Tension and Triumph*

THEME 1

World War II and its aftermath ushered in an era of domestic prosperity—a huge baby boom, internal migration, and major scientific and medical breakthroughs.

THEME 2

The dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki created new fears of mass destruction, raising the stakes in the American effort to combat communist influences at home and abroad.

THEME 3

While a growing middle class was attaining the American Dream, many in the United States were denied access to the same opportunities.

Appendix B: Postwar America Graphic Organizer

	Changes in American Society (What are the big ideas during this historical era?)	Examples of These Changes
<p>Patterns of Internal Migration</p>		
<p>Economic Prosperity After the War</p>		
<p>Red Scare Paranoia</p>		
<p>Scientific Discovery</p>		

Appendix C: Letter to the Editor of the *Pittsburgh Courier*

These Men Developed The “Double V” Idea

EDITOR'S NOTE: The *Pittsburgh Courier*'s “Double V” idea, created in the mind of James G. Thompson of Wichita, Kansas, and brought to glowing light through the brilliant pen of Wilbert L. Holloway, *Courier* staff artist, has swept the nation like wildfire.

The letter of Mr. Thompson, which appeared first in our issue of

January 31, is reprinted here, because of its over all significance and because of its gem-like literary value.

The editors of *The Pittsburgh Courier* suggest that everyone who reads this letter, clip it out and place it in a conspicuous place... where all may see AND read!

DEAR EDITOR:

Like all true Americans, my greatest desire at this time, this crucial point of our history; is a desire for a complete victory over the forces of evil, which threaten our existence today. Behind that desire is also a desire to serve, this, my country, in the most advantageous way. Most of our leaders are suggesting that we sacrifice every other ambition to the paramount one, victory. With this I agree; but I also wonder if another victory could not be achieved at the same time.

After all, the things that beset the world now are basically the same things which upset the equilibrium of nations internally, states, counties, cities, homes and even the individual.

Being an American of dark complexion and some 26 years, these questions flash through my mind:

“Should I sacrifice my life to live half American?”

“Will things be better for the next generation in the peace to follow?”

“Would it be demanding too much to demand full citizenship rights in exchange for the sacrificing of my life.”

“Is the kind of America I know worth defending?”

“Will America be a true and pure democracy after this war?”

“Will colored Americans suffer still the indignities that have been heaped upon them in the past?”

These and other questions need answering; I want to know, and I believe every colored American, who is thinking, wants to know.

This may be the wrong time to broach such subjects, but haven't all good things obtained by men been secured through sacrifice during just such times of strife?

I suggest that while we keep defense and victory in the forefront that we don't lose sight of our fight for true democracy at home.

In conclusion let me say that though these questions often permeate my mind, I love American and am willing to die for the America I know will someday become a reality.



The “V for Victory” sign is being displayed prominently in all so-called democratic countries which are fighting for victory over aggression, slavery and tyranny. If this V sign means that to those now engaged in this great conflict then let colored Americans adopt the double VV for a double victory...The first V for victory over our enemies from without, the second V for victory over our enemies within. For surely those who perpetrate these ugly prejudices here are seeing to destroy our democratic form of government just as surely as the Axis forces.

This should not and would not lessen our efforts to bring this conflict to a successful conclusion; but should and would make us stronger to resist these evil forces which threaten us. America could become united as never before and become truly the home of democracy.

In way of an answer to the foregoing questions in a preceding paragraph, I might say that there is no doubt that this country is worth defending; things will be different for the next generation; colored Americans will come into their own, and America will eventually become the true democracy it was designed to be. These things will become a reality in time; but not through any relaxation of the efforts to secure them.

JAMES G. THOMPSON.

Please note: This newspaper article has been re-typeset to improve readability. No wording, punctuation, or layout has been altered in the process. The original article appeared on page 5 of the *Courier*. It was centered on the page and was surrounded with photos related to Mr. Thompson receiving an award for his effort.

Context:

Letter to the Editor of the *Pittsburgh Courier* from James G. Thompson, Sat. April 11, 1942, *These Men Developed the “Double V” Idea*.

Item 5826

James G. Thompson, LETTER TO THE EDITOR OF THE PITTSBURGH COURIER “THESE MEN DEVELOPED THE ‘DOUBLE V’ IDEA” (1942). Used with permission of GRM Associates.

Appendix C: Letter to the Editor of the *Pittsburgh Courier*

Transcript: “These Men Developed The ‘Double V’ Idea”

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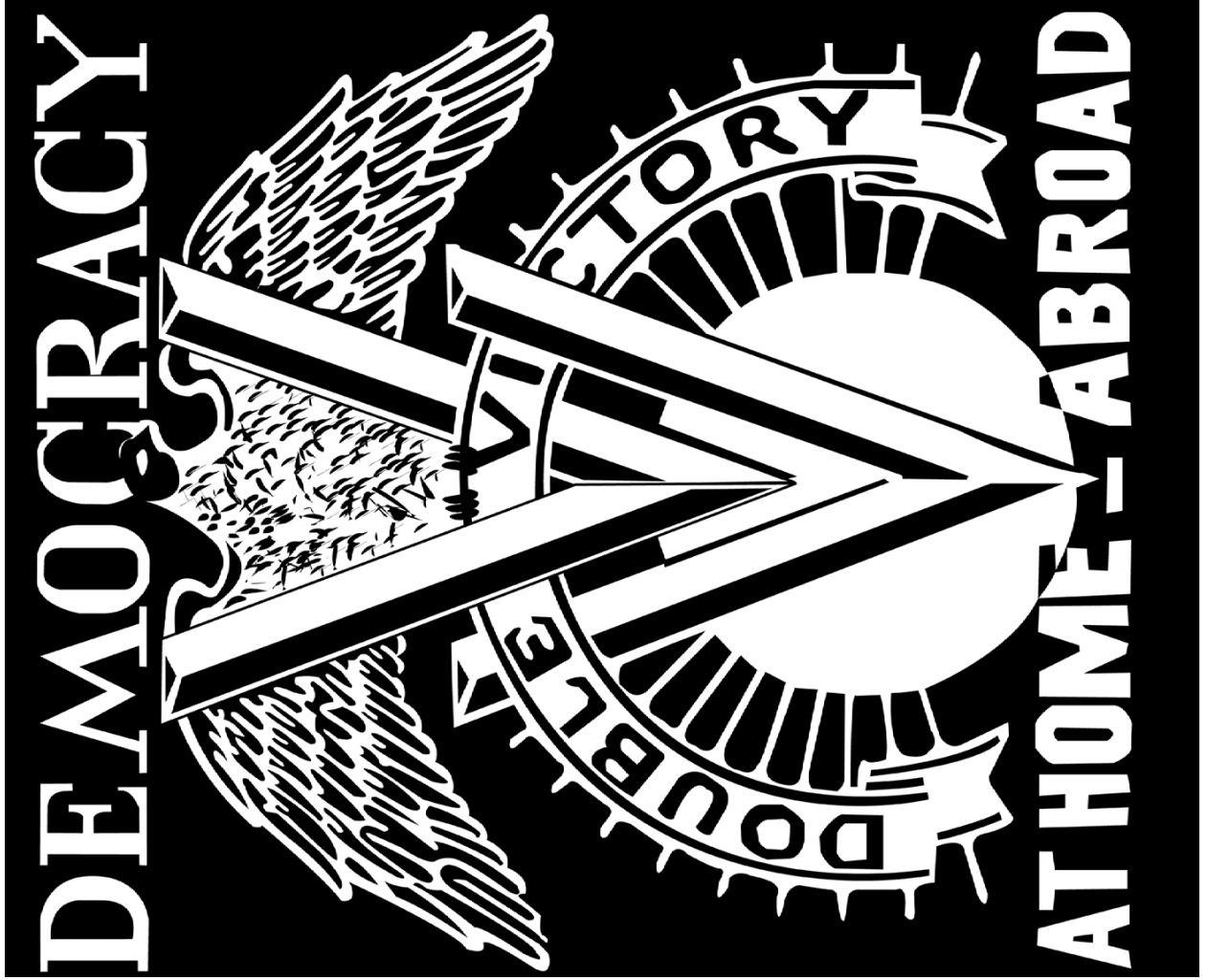
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JAMES G. THOMPSON.

Appendix D: The Double V and the Black Press



Context:

Insignia for the Double-V campaign, ushered in by African American editor Ira Lewis and readers of the *Pittsburgh Courier* during World War II.

Item 5632
Pittsburgh Courier,
INSIGNIA OF THE "DOUBLE V"
CAMPAIGN (1942).
Courtesy of the Library
of Congress.

Appendix E: Questions About the Black Press

1. What issues did the Black press explore in the decades leading up to and following World War II?
2. What was a role assumed by the Black press during World War II? What were the causes which this press focused on during the war?
3. How should the Double V campaign be remembered in terms of its success in helping African American soldiers returning to the states after the war?

Appendix F: Content Knowledge Assessment Scoring Guide

Points	Description
4	<p>Exceeded Expectations—The answer met all of the expectations (see the description “Fully Met Expectations” below) and exceeded those expectations by demonstrating advanced understanding in any of the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides rich and detailed historical knowledge • Questions, critiques, or extends the theme • Uses the exhibit to provide an in-depth analysis of the era • Refers to one or more additional and relevant primary sources
3	<p>Fully Met Expectations—The answer responds to the prompt in all of the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates how the exhibit supports the theme • Draws on relevant historical knowledge to connect the exhibit to the theme • Demonstrates an understanding of the theme • Provides relevant historical knowledge of the era • Provides an analysis of the exhibit
2	<p>Partially Met Expectations—The answer did not meet all of the expectations (see the description “Fully Met Expectations” above) but did demonstrate understanding in all of the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates understanding of the theme, though understanding may be incomplete • Provides relevant historical knowledge of the era • Provides analysis of the exhibit that may be limited
1	<p>Did Not Meet Expectations—The answer did not meet expectation because of one or more of the following statements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did not address the theme • Did not demonstrate historical knowledge of the era • Did not discuss or misinterpreted the exhibit
0	<p>Did Not Answer—The answer did not address the prompt.</p>



NOTES
