

# The American Dream in the Fifties

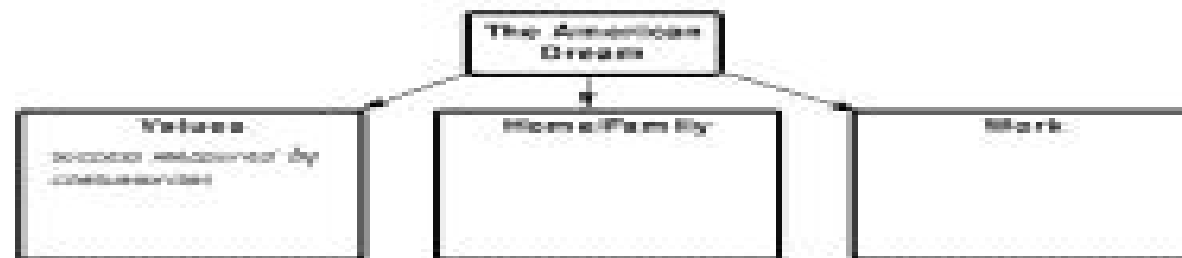
## BEFORE YOU READ

In the last section, you read about the postwar boom in the United States.

In this section, you will read how many Americans achieved their dreams of material comfort and prosperity, but some found the cost of conformity too high.

## AS YOU READ

Take notes on the chart below. Fill it in with examples of specific goals that characterized the American Dream for suburbanites of the 1950s.



### TERMS AND NAMES

**conglomerate** Major corporation that owns smaller companies in unrelated industries

**franchise** Company that offers similar products or services in many locations

**baby boom** Booming birthrate from 1946 to 1964

**Dr. Jonas Salk** Developer of a vaccine to prevent polio

**consumerism** Excessive concern with buying material goods

**planned obsolescence** Purposely making products to become outdated or wear out quickly

## The Organization and the Organization Man (pages 641–643)

### What changes took place in the American workplace in the 1950s?

The economy grew rapidly in the 1950s. By 1956, more Americans were white-collar workers in offices than were in blue-collar factory jobs. White-collar workers were paid better. They usually worked in service industries, such as sales and communications.

Businesses also expanded. They formed conglomerates, or major corporations that own smaller companies in unrelated industries. Other businesses expanded by franchising. A franchise is a company that offers similar products or services in many locations, such as fast-food restaurants.

These large companies offered well-paying, secure jobs to certain kinds of workers. These workers were conformists, or team players. They were “company people” who would fit in and not rock the boat. Businesses rewarded loyalty rather than creativity. They promoted a sameness, or standardization, of people as well as products. Books such as *The Organization Man* and *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* criticized this conformity.

1. What changes occurred in the American work force and workplace in the 1950s?

# 19 2 Guided Reading American Dream In The Fifties Answers

**Rachel Sandford**



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