

Knowledge Organiser for Year
Group 6
Learning Connection Block:
Discoveries

Subject: History

Through the Decades

BRITAIN IN THE 1950S

Home Life

It was rare for women to work once they were married in the 1950s. A woman's place was in the home with her children, but in this decade lots of appliances were introduced to make a housewife's work easier, such as vacuum cleaners, cookers and toasters.

Only around a third of families had a washing machine though and even fewer had a refrigerator or freezer.

The home was where the family spent most of their leisure time. Families would listen to the wireless in the evenings or watch TV if they had one. Children would play board games or play outside with their friends.



Population

In 1951, the population in Britain was 50,290,000. 25% of the population in 1951 was over the age of 50. Britain experienced a 'baby boom' during the 1950s as after the war there was a rise in the number of births. The war also caused a surge of settlers from countries such as Jamaica and the Caribbean because Britain needed workers to help rebuild the country after the war. But many people feared the increase of black communities, particularly in areas such as Birmingham, Nottingham and west London. This was demonstrated by the Notting Hill race riots in 1958.

Popular Culture



After the austere years of the 1940s, the 1950s was a period when young people wanted to enjoy themselves. Young people stopped dressing like their parents and developed their own styles.

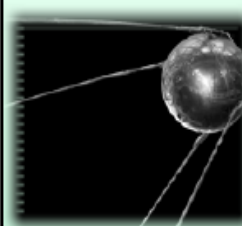
There was a big influence from America in Britain, particularly in terms of music as rock and roll became more and more popular. Pop Art began in London in the 1950s which offered a new artistic perspective, often using items drawn from advertising, comic strips or mundane objects. The most famous Pop Artist was the American Andy Warhol.

Work Life

It was the responsibility of the man of the household to earn a living for his family. The jobs that women had held during the war years were given back to men and the women were no longer entitled to equal pay. At this time, there were lots of jobs available in factories and there was little unemployment. Around 1 in 10 employees worked in professional or managerial posts. There were around 700,000 coal miners in Britain due to the high demand of coal for electricity. Because there weren't as many opportunities for travel as there are today, people worked close to where they lived.

Technology

As well as advances in technology at home, such as with televisions and telephones, there were also a lot of technological changes around the world and even in space. Sputnik, launched by the Soviet Union on 4th October 1957, was the first satellite to orbit the earth. In 1956, the first transatlantic telephone cable was laid between America and Britain. 1956 was also the year that the hovercraft was invented.



Sputnik

There were lots of developments for computers too. The silicon chip was invented which made computers smaller although computers will still only used in industry.

Inventions

1950 - Credit card
1951 - Superglue
1953 - Transistor Radio
1954 - McDonald's restaurants
1955 - Lego
1956 - Hovercraft
1956 - Velcro
1956 - Computer hard disk
1958 - Modem
1958 - Hula Hoop
1959 - Barbie dolls
1959 - Microchip

1960s

The 1960s decade refers to the years from the beginning of 1960 to the end of 1969. It is known as the Swinging Sixties and is associated with the birth of British pop music and fashion.

Events

- 1961 - **First man in space**
- 1966 - England won the football World cup
- 1969 - First humans to walk on the Moon

Population

- 1960 Population of Britain was about 53 million
- 1960 World's population was just over 3 billion.

Cost of items

- The average house price was £2,530
- Loaf of bread 5p
- A season ticket to see Manchester United cost £8.50.

By the 1960s, Britain had nearly recovered from the effects of World War II. Lots of new houses had been built and for the first time, most of these houses had electricity. The majority of homes had televisions and new programmes like Coronation Street and Dr Who started. In 1967, the first colour TV sets were introduced.



William Hartnell, the first Dr Who

But it was music that really gave the 1960s the reputation for being 'swinging'. Pop music exploded with energy during this period. Bands and singers from both Britain and America, such as the Rolling Stones, The Beach Boys, Jimi Hendrix, Dusty Springfield and Cliff Richard, introduced new sounds and styles to the young people of Britain.



But there was one British band from Liverpool who really changed the face of pop music forever...

The Beatles.

The Beatles (consisting of Paul McCartney, John Lennon, George Harrison and Ringo Starr) recorded their first single 'Love Me Do' in 1962 and within a year had become the most popular band in Britain.

Racism had been a continual problem in Britain during the 1950s and 1960s. In 1965, the Race Relations Act attempted to stop racial discrimination in public places. People around the world were trying to make sure that people of all colours had equal rights.



In America, Martin Luther King became a famous leader in the fight for American civil rights. The world was shocked when he was shot dead in 1968. This highlighted how some people were still against equal rights for black people.

Most children's parents were married in the 1960s. It was still quite unusual to have parents who were not married or who were divorced.

It was normal for the father to go to work and the mother to stay at home to look after the family. Some women did start to work too but it was still very unusual for a woman to be a mother and have a career. The average wage in the 1960s was around £14 a week, or £728 a year.



Britain in the 1970s

The 1970s in Britain was a period when lots of people wanted liberation. Women campaigned for equal pay for doing the same job as men. They also wanted men to do an equal share of the housework so that women could have an equal chance of having a good career.



But what most people remember about the 1970s in Britain were the economic problems the country faced. Rising inflation led the government to try and reduce people's wages. This led to lots of strike action, particularly by miners. This meant that there wasn't enough coal being produced to meet the country's power needs. In 1972, a three day working week was imposed to try and save electricity. There were frequent power cuts in people's homes. People had to have candles on hand and lots of families had to cook on camping stoves.



By the end of the 1970s, people like dustbin men and grave diggers were also on strike. This was called the 'winter of discontent'. In Liverpool, piles of coffins stacked up as grave diggers refused to work until disputes over pay had been settled. Rubbish piled up in cities around the country. ITV was forced to go off-air for five months.



But despite the economical problems of the 1970s there was also lots of positive events. In 1977, for example, the whole country celebrated the Queen's Silver Jubilee with street parties.

There were lots of advances in medicine too. Greater understanding of how babies are made led to more possibilities for people who could not have babies naturally. In 1978, the first test-tube baby, Louise Brown, was born. New scanning equipment, such as CAT scans, also allowed doctors to scan images of the body so they could see what was going on inside.



Advances in women's rights became evident when in 1979 Margaret Thatcher became the UK's first female Prime Minister.

Another positive change for Britain was the discovery of oil in the North Sea. Before this, the country had to rely on oil supplies from other countries. This discovery meant that Britain's oil consumption could be mined from the North Sea without the need to pay lots of money to other companies. The Queen started the flow of oil in 1975 when she pressed a gold button at a special ceremony.



Inventions:

1971 - Digital Watch
1971 - Personal Computer
1974 - Post It Notes
1974 - Rubik's Cube
1979 - Mobile Phone
1979 - Walkman
1979 - Roller Blades

Facts:

Population in 1971 = 55,928,000
Average life expectancy for men was around 69 and for women was around 75
91% of families had a TV in 1971
64% of families had a washing machine
A quarter of the British workforce was female
In 1979, a million people were unemployed

What were the main events of the 1980s?

There were lots of exciting events in the 1980s. The marriage of Prince Charles and Lady Diana Spencer in 1981 brought crowds of 600,000 people to the streets of London.

The marriage, which took place in St Paul's Cathedral, was televised and shown in countries around the world. Britain had a national holiday to celebrate.



Another exciting event was Live Aid in 1985. Live Aid was a rock concert organised by Bob Geldof and Midge Ure to raise money for those suffering from famine in Africa. Concerts took place simultaneously in London and Philadelphia and was billed as the 'Global Jukebox'. It was the biggest rock concert that had ever taken place and included performances from dozens of famous performers.

1.5 billion people watched Live Aid and a total of £110 million was raised.



One of the biggest characteristics of the 1980s were the technological advances that were made. This decade was the period when personal computers became very popular and more and more people started having computers in their homes. Microsoft Windows was launched in 1985 and in the same year Nintendo launched its first entertainment system, including Super Mario Brothers. In 1989, the Nintendo Game Boy was also launched.



There was also a great deal of interest in space exploration during the 1980s. The first space shuttles were used to explore space. In 1981, the Voyager 2 spacecraft reached Saturn and sent images back to earth, and in 1986 images of Uranus were seen for the first time.

Margaret Thatcher was born in 1925. In 1959 she became a Conservative Member of Parliament for Finchley and in 1979 she became Britain's first female Prime Minister. She died in April 2013.

Opinions about Margaret Thatcher's policies differed greatly in Britain. To begin with she was very unpopular with lots of people. She was in favour of privatising the state-owned industries, lowering taxes and reforming the trade unions. Her policies did lower inflation but there was lots of unemployment.



Margaret Thatcher became known as the 'Iron Lady' because she was such a strong leader. During her first term as Prime Minister the economy began to grow and things started looking up. But then war broke out in the Falkland Islands when Argentina attacked the British Islands and claimed them as their own.

The world of technology in the 1990s

Developments in technology meant that work locations changed greatly. In 1991, the World Wide Web was available to the public and computers had become commonplace. This meant that the world became much smaller...people could work from anywhere and were no longer limited to certain locations.

By the end of the 1990s there were 130 million web users in the world.



The divorce of Prince Charles and Princess Diana



The wedding of Princes Charles and Lady Diana Spencer had been the event of the 80s. Millions of people worldwide watched the fairytale wedding. Diana soon found her way into the hearts of the British public due, amongst other things, to her extensive charity work.

But problems within the marriage became apparent and in 1992 it was announced that the two would separate. In 1996, the divorce was finalised. This was unusual for the royal family but in the rest of the country, one out of three marriages ended in divorce in the 90s.

But an even more shocking event was to take place almost exactly a year after the divorce was announced. In August 1997, Diana Princess of Wales, was killed in a car crash in Paris.



Britain, and indeed the world, was devastated. She was greatly mourned and millions turned out to see the funeral procession and lay flowers in her memory.

Some other events...

1st April 1993

Council Tax replaces the unpopular Poll Tax.

14th November 1994

National Lottery tickets went on sale for the first time.

23rd February 1997

The first cloned animal, Dolly the sheep, was successfully cloned in Scotland.

4th May 1997

The Labour government returned to power when Tony Blair was elected as Prime Minister.

	1950s	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s
Work life	Lots of factory workers due to expanding industries	More employed in service industries than manufacturing	Women given equal pay rights for doing the same job as men	More and more women entering employment	Over half of people in employment working with computers
Home life	Women stayed at home to look after the house and children	Supermarkets opened across town and cities	90% of families had a TV. Microwave ovens went on sale	More single-parent families due to divorce than death of a spouse	One in three marriages ended in divorce
Population	Large number of immigrants from Commonwealth countries	Race Relations Act introduced to stop racism in public places	Commission for Racial Equality introduced	Lots of families migrated to Australia, New Zealand and South Africa	Almost 10% of British population non-white or of mixed race
Technology	Silicon chip invented to make computers smaller	Apranet, an early version of the internet was developed	Personal computer invented. Jumbo jet starts service	First version of Microsoft Windows launched	World Wide Web available to the public
Popular culture	Commercial television started	Beatlemania took Britain and the rest of the world by storm	Culture of liberation and self-expression. Colour TV and cinema	More people going on holiday to foreign places than ever before	130 million World Wide Web users in the UK