

# The Modern World

*The 20<sup>th</sup> Century since 1945: Promises  
and Paradoxes (1945–Present)*



Economics and integration

Population and resources

**A global society**

Contemporary conflicts

## Thematic Icons



Economics and business



Geography and environment



Historical concepts and questions



Politics, government and citizenship



Religion and thought



Society and culture



War, diplomacy and foreign policy

**Icons:** For more detailed instructions, see the *User Guide*



Flash activity (these activities are not editable)



Teacher notes included in the Notes page



By the end of this section, you will have learned about how the world has become an interconnected global society and understand these key developments:

- Advances in computing and communications
- Advances in medicine
- The changing role of women and children
- Cultural integration and popular culture.



After the Cold War space race to be the first to reach space and the moon, the U.S. and Soviet Union space programs began to cooperate on projects from 1972.

The U.S. Space Shuttle program ran from 1981 to 2011 and many other countries now have space programs, including India, China, Japan and Europe. The **International Space Station (ISS)** was launched in 1998 to serve as a laboratory and observatory.

The ISS has been occupied by scientists, astronauts and other individuals from Russia, the U.S., Europe and Japan.



Why is space exploration so important?



The postwar era saw a revolution in computing and telecommunications. This changed the way people communicate, work and receive information  
Can you sort these key developments of the computer age into chronological order?  
More information about each of them can be found by pressing the orange information buttons.

Press **start** to begin.

start





Postwar technological progress in science and medicine has improved many people's lives. Can you match these medical discoveries to the year in which they occurred?

Press the information panels on the right to see a definition and image for each of them.

Press **start** to begin.

start



What other medical advances have been made?



In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the lives of women in the West changed dramatically. They had fewer children: in 1950, European women had on average 2.1 children; by 2011, it was just 1.4.

Women have been able to play a larger role in society and achieve prominent positions due to the following changes:



- right to vote
- birth control
- longer life expectancy
- consumer conveniences
- economic changes.

How did these changes benefit women?



However, women still faced widespread discrimination and had to battle to achieve equal rights after World War II. More women entered the workforce but they were paid significantly less than men and some jobs were closed to them altogether.

**Feminism** is the belief that men and women should be legal, political and social equals.

The feminist movement in the 1960s and 1970s helped to end discrimination and to achieve many things that we take for granted today.



Is there still a gender inequality today?





In the industrialized West, children no longer played a substantial part in the family income by the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. This was a result of:

- increased affluence
- stricter child labor laws
- compulsory education.



People also increasingly understood the psychological and medical needs of children, changing views about what they need for their development. As a result of these changes, children and teenagers began to develop their own cultures.

Has the role of children changed everywhere?



Following World War II, American culture began to seep into the cultural experiences of people around the world.

The Marshall Plan, NATO, international U.S. military bases and the global spread of American corporations brought expanded exposure to American culture. Between 1950 and 1965, American investments in Europe rose by 800%.



Mass media was dominated by American movies, TV and ads, leading to an increased demand for American fashions, products, music and culture.

Why might Americanization have been opposed?



In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, ideas, customs and traditions have spread around the world and blended, having a large social and cultural impact.

Press on the buttons to find out more about cultural integration and the development of a global popular culture.

Press **start** to begin.

**start**





Increased exposure to Western culture and values spread ideas of democracy and representative government around the world.



Many people around the world began to desire similar freedoms and rights. These include freedom of expression and information and the right to security, privacy and justice. Some of them began to seek liberation from these oppressive influences and governments.

Why might there be a difference between the depiction of Western culture and reality?

