Harry S. Truman

On April 12, 1945, following the death of President Franklin D. Roosevelt and after having served only a few months as Vice President, Harry S. Truman became the thirty-third President of the United States. Visit the White House website to learn more about the life of this decisive leader in American history, and then answer the following questions.

Questions: How would you have felt if you were thrust into the office of president like Truman? What do you think were the most important decisions made by Truman during his presidency?

Era 9: Postwar United States, Standard 1A
whitehouse.gov/history/presidents/ht33.html

Food for relief

With the end of World War II in Europe on May 8, 1945, came the realization of the devastation the war had brought to both the people and the land. Many countries faced food shortages in the years following the war. America’s food and agricultural system rose to the challenge and helped supply Europe with emergency food assistance.

“Food production declined during 1945-46 in Europe and North Africa because of drought and difficulties resulting from the war. . . . It became obvious [to the USDA] that grain was the best immediate answer to needs abroad. On February 6, 1946, [President Truman] announced the following nine emergency measures to meet the needs.

“1. A vigorous campaign to secure the cooperation of consumers, bakers and retailers in conservation of food, with particular emphasis on bread
2. Discontinuance of the use of wheat in the direct production of alcohol and beer and limitation of the use of other grains for production of . . . alcohol and beer
3. An increase in the wheat flour extraction rate to 80 percent
4. Control of wheat and flour inventories
5. Giving the shipment of essential foods preference in rail use
6. Direct Government control over exports of wheat and flour
7. The export during the calendar year of 375,000 tons of fats and oils, 1.6 billion pounds of meat, and increased quantities of dairy products
8. Release of ships for the movement of food to Europe
9. Development of ways of conserving grain being fed to livestock and poultry for use as human food.”

Questions: Why did the United States send relief food and supplies to its former enemies? If you were President of the United States during this time, how would you have answered the world’s call for postwar relief? Does the United States continue to assist war-torn nations today? Why?

Era 9: Postwar United States, Standard 1A
Television in America
In the 1950s, television became widely accepted as a news and entertainment medium in the United States. Visit the Federal Communications Commission website to find out more about the history of one of the most pervasive inventions in use today—television.

Question: What influence has television had on American culture and economy?

Era 9: Postwar United States, Standard 1C
fcc.gov/omd/history/tv

Postwar living standards
The United States experienced an economic boom after World War II. The above graph illustrates some of the changes that occurred on farms during the 1940s and 1950s, using the number of cars, telephones, and homes with electricity to measure the standard of living.

Questions: With all the aid that the United States was sending overseas, how is it that the standard of living for farmers was increasing so rapidly? How would life on the farm change with electricity? Was electricity a luxury or a necessity for farmers?

Era 9: Postwar United States, Standard 1C

U.S. demographics, 1940–1960
The population of the United States increased by 20 million between 1940 and 1950. This decade also saw a decrease of nearly 5 million farmers and 700,000 farms. These changes are charted in the above graph.

Questions: Why was the farm population decreasing during these years? How was America able to continue feeding itself and much of the world while having fewer and fewer farms and farmers?

Era 9: Postwar United States, Standard 1C
Korean War

“On June 25, 1950, the Republic of Korea was invaded by armed forces from Communist North Korea. The United Nations promptly went to the aid of the invaded nation. Although several countries supported the United Nations with troops and equipment, the major fighting force and its supplies came from the United States. For the next 3 years, this war influenced every aspect of American life, including agriculture.

“On July 21, 1950, the President asked the Secretary of Agriculture and other agency heads to undertake a detailed review of programs with a view to lessening the demand upon services, commodities, raw materials, manpower, and facilities in competition with those needed for national defense. One result of the President’s request was that steps were taken in the farm housing program to curtail the use of building materials for nondefense purposes and to prevent Government loans from adding to inflationary pressures.”

Questions: What was the cause of U.S. involvement in the Korean War? Why did member countries of the United Nations also become involved?

Era 9: Postwar United States, Standard 1C

Dextran

Dextran is a substance derived from corn that can be used as a replacement for blood plasma. It was first used during the Korean War, when plasma was in short supply. Dextran offered several advantages over plasma: it could be sterilized, and it could be kept longer without refrigeration. It’s also cheaper than plasma and is derived from cane or beet sugar instead of coming from human blood donors. Agricultural Research Service (ARS) scientists at the Northern Regional Research Lab in Peoria, Illinois, discovered a way to economically produce dextran in the necessary quantities. The military began using it in 1950, and it was approved for civilian use in 1953. Dextran is still used today.

Questions: Why are many important discoveries made during wartime? What are some of the discoveries that have been made as a result of more recent wars? Why does the USDA place a heavy emphasis on research?

Era 9: Postwar United States, Standard 1C
Source: ARS Timeline: 138 Years of Ag Research, U.S. Department of Agriculture [online].
Fertilizers: friend or foe?
“The Department of Agriculture has estimated that increased use of fertilizers accounted for 55 percent of the productivity gains per crop acre that occurred from 1940 to 1955. These triumphs of fertilizer and of other technological improvements had an ironic result. They created huge price-depressing surpluses, which by the 1950s, in combination with insufficient migration from the farm, impoverished large portions of rural America. Only the famine in Europe and the Korean War saved the farmer from depression in the Truman Years.”

Questions: What were the positive and negative results of fertilizer use in the 1950s? What are the benefits and challenges posed by other research innovations? Do new interventions solve the problems for which they are introduced?

Era 9: Postwar United States, Standard 1C

Abundant crops
Agricultural research into the benefits gained from the practice of crop and pasture rotation has proven to be one of the most important ways USDA research has improved agriculture. Researchers proved that rotation helped produce more abundant grasses and crops. The process involved planting corn the first year and wheat the second year, followed by three years of pasture and hay crops. Fields that were rotated yielded 11 percent more crops.

Questions: Why does this process help create better crop yields? What purpose does it serve in helping crops to grow?

Era 9: Postwar United States, Standard 1C

Water conservation
During times of crisis like war and drought, Americans have been asked to conserve valuable resources such as fuel, food, or water. Visit the Tennessee Valley Authority website to learn about water conservation and then answer the following questions.

Questions: Why is water conservation important in some areas of the country? Is it important where you live? Why or why not? If it is, what can your family do to conserve water?
Era 9: Postwar United States, Standard 1C
tva.gov/river/watersupply/help.htm
Growing a Nation: Prosperity & Challenges
Lesson 3: 1950-1969, Screen 2, Embedded Resource 6

Soybeans
Soybeans provide a wide variety of products for human use. Their development has led to new food products, clothing, cosmetics, and more. Visit the Agricultural Research Service website to learn more about products that are made better with soybeans.

Questions: Do any of the products listed come as a surprise to you? What is it about soybeans that makes them so useful? Is it their flavor? Texture? Consistency?

Era 9: Postwar United States, Standard 1C
ars.usda.gov/is/timeline/soy.htm

Growing a Nation: Prosperity & Challenges
Lesson 3: 1950-1969, Screen 3, Embedded Resource 1

1953 drought
During the 1950s, the Great Plains and the Southwest experienced a five-year drought characterized by low rainfall and extremely high temperatures. By 1954, the drought affected ten states from the Midwest to the Great Plains, and stretched southward into New Mexico. The drought ended in most areas after the spring rains of 1957.

The 1950s drought devastated agriculture in the affected areas. Crop yields in some regions dropped as much as 50 percent, and excessive temperatures and low rainfall dried up grazing lands. Without enough grass for grazing, and with hay prices too high, some ranchers resorted to feeding their cattle a mixture of prickly pear cactus and molasses. The government initiated a feed aid program to help ranchers save their livestock from starvation.

Questions: In what ways do droughts and other natural phenomena still affect us today? How can we prepare for such eventualities? How does the government intervene when emergencies such as this occur?

Era 9: Postwar United States, Standard 1C
Rising cost of farming
Owning a farm in the 1950s was becoming expensive. In 1940, it cost around $6,622 per year to keep a farm running; in 1952, it was $23,027.

**Questions:** Inflation is one cause of rising prices, but what may some of the other factors have been? Why did farm expenses rise so quickly in this short period of time?

Era 9: Postwar United States, Standard 1C

Frozen foods
The 1950s ushered in a new era of consumerism. New and improved products of all kinds promised to make life easier for consumers. Frozen dinners and other convenience foods were gaining in popularity as more women took on jobs outside the home.

From 1948 to 1965, USDA scientists worked with the frozen food industry to improve the quality of the products. USDA research focused on how time and temperature affected various frozen foods in terms of quality and stability. The work of the USDA scientists helped greatly improve the quality of frozen foods and boosted this multibillion-dollar industry.

**Questions:** What social factors were playing a part in more women joining the workforce? How do you think communication technologies such as television might have played a role?

Era 9: Postwar United States, Standard 1C
Source: National Agricultural Library [online].
Cooperatives
Farmer cooperatives have long been a way for farmers to band together to improve their economic conditions. Farmers can cooperate to maximize their purchasing power, obtain credit, market their products, and lobby for political change. Visit the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives website to learn how cooperatives help to increase farm wealth.

Questions: How did cooperatives in the 1950s gain competitive power? If you were a small farmer, would it be hard to compete against a cooperative?

Era 9: Postwar United States, Standard 1C
ncfc.org/about-ncfc/about-co-ops

Large mechanized farms
Throughout rural America, modern, mechanized, commercial farms were better able to maximize the economies of scale that the new and expensive technologies offered, and they began to replace smaller, family-owned farms. Cooperatives between smaller farms were one way these farmers could compete in the emerging commercialized farm economy. Cooperatives allowed members to pool resources to jointly buy new machinery and to market their products as a group.

Questions: What advantages did large farms have over small farms? How do these advantages reflect the current practices of farming corporations?

Era 9: Postwar United States, Standard 1C

The mechanical cotton picker
Until World War II, cotton farming remained unmechanized. Plowing, cultivating, and harvesting were done by backbreaking labor. Although the U.S. Patent Office granted a patent for a mechanical cotton picker in 1850, it took nearly one hundred years to perfect a machine that would truly revolutionize cotton growing.

In 1895, August Campbell received a patent on a spindle-type cotton picker. In the 1930s, brothers John and Mack Rust improved upon the spindle design and produced an effective picker. While the Rust brothers were working on their machine, International Harvester Company began experimenting with cotton pickers based on Campbell’s design in the 1920s, and introduced the first commercial machines in the early 1940s. The John Deere Company introduced a stripper-type harvester in the 1930s. By 1962, about 40 percent of American cotton was picked by spindle-type pickers and 15 percent by stripping machines.

Questions: New inventions are conceptualized, funded, and marketed constantly across the entire world. What organizations encourage innovation? Why do they support it? What advantages does a person who can innovate bring to an organization?

Era 9: Postwar United States, Standard 1C
Source: Donald Holley, Mechanical Cotton Picker, EH.Net Encyclopedia [online].
Farming in Russia
“Russian farmers didn’t have reasonable incentives to work hard or be efficient. Nikita Khrushchev, the communist leader of Russia in the fifties, told a story of meeting a farmer in Russia. He said:

"'Tell me,’ I asked, ‘what’s your best crop here?’

"'Oats.’

“I couldn’t believe my ears. I knew that the soil on this collective farm was so sandy it was barely arable. ‘Are you trying to tell me you get high yield of oats around here?’

"'No, we get a very low yield.’

"'Then why do you say oats is your best crop?’

"'Because it’s the easiest to harvest.’

“This man’s cynicism stemmed from a lack of material incentive. His salary was completely independent of how much his farm produced.”

Questions: How is farming in America different? What incentives did a farmer have for producing more commodities? What motivates farmers to continue to improve their livelihood?

Era 9: Postwar United States, Standard 1C

Communism
Ezra Taft Benson, Secretary of Agriculture from 1953 to 1960, described some of the differences between the United States and Russia during the Cold War:

“In Russia some 48 million persons are working in agriculture about 45 percent of their total labor force compared with ten percent in the United States. Yet they worry about scarcities while we are concerned with over-abundance.”

Questions: What are the primary principles of Communism that produce results such as these? How does a free market economy promote competition, innovation, and personal wealth?

Era 9: Postwar United States, Standard 1C
Forgotten War
The Korean War, also known as the “Forgotten War,” ended in 1953. The Korean War was one of America’s first conflicts against Communism during the period known as the Cold War, which effectively ended with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Questions: Why is the Korean War known as the “Forgotten War”? What other events were prime concerns for America that may have overshadowed the war? Can important historical events be upstaged by others? Why does this happen?

Secretary Benson
On November 4, 2003, Secretary Ann M. Veneman celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of Agriculture Secretary Ezra Taft Benson’s tenure under President Dwight D. Eisenhower.

“One of the first things he did was reorganize the Department, getting closer to the notion of today’s mission areas,’ Veneman said. ‘For instance, he moved the Agriculture Conservation Program out of the Production and Marketing Administration and into the Soil Conservation Service, or what is now the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

“Secretary Benson oversaw the creation of the Foreign Agricultural Service, and we celebrated its 50th anniversary on this Patio just this year, earlier this year, as well. He established the Agricultural Marketing Service and the Agricultural Research Service. He helped create the Soil Bank to put production and demand in better line and promoted basic conservation,’ she said.

“In the landmark year of 1956, the Conservation Reserve Program came into existence as part of the Soil Bank Act, later followed by the Acreage Reserve. That was also the year that the Rural Development Program began. Secretary Benson expanded agricultural exports and a purchase program to remove excess commodities from the markets, and he helped to oversee the beginning of the surplus disposal program in international markets that became Public Law 480, named Food for Peace by President Eisenhower.

“When he left office, he was asked about his work on behalf of American agriculture. After all the policy and legislative debates, after serving a President for two terms, after meeting with countless foreign leaders, he said his work as a county agent gave him the greatest satisfaction. Helping boys and girls grow up to be good farmers and good citizens, he said, assisting neighbors to improve their fields, their livestock, their marketing, and their homes. Those words speak volumes about Ezra Taft Benson,’ Veneman said.”

Questions: How will you be honored fifty years from now by those who have never met you? What does it take to live a life that earns this type of respect? On what guiding principles will you base your life?
Propects for Agriculture

Ezra Taft Benson served as the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture during the Eisenhower administration. Watch this film to learn his views on how to make American agriculture successful.

Questions: Why is Secretary Benson optimistic about the future of American agriculture? What does he say can help farmers be more prosperous? What does Benson think are the important qualities of American farmers? Do you think agriculture has an effect on the peace and prosperity of nations? Why or why not?

Source: Film Secretary Benson’s New Year Message, 1955, courtesy of U.S. National Archives and Records Administration.

Milk

Milk has been offered as part of school lunch programs since 1946. Watch this film to learn more about the government’s efforts to increase milk consumption.

Questions: Who do you think is the audience for this film? What are the similarities and differences between school age children in the early ’50s and now, as apparent from this film? Why have the government and nutritionists encouraged people, especially children, to drink more milk? How did milk surpluses affect this program? How often do you get milk at school? May you take more than one?

Source: Film More Milk for More Children, undated, courtesy of U.S. National Archives and Records Administration.
Klamath weed
Klamath weed, known commonly as St. John’s Wort, is a highly invasive plant native to Eurasia that crowds out native plant species and is toxic to livestock. In 1946, the USDA released 5,000 *Chrysolina quadrigemina* beetles as biological controls against Klamath weed. This represented the first successful attempt in the United States to control a weed with a plant-eating insect. During the 1950s and 1960s, the beetle, which became known as the Klamath beetle, helped to eradicate Klamath weed infesting one-sixth (around 2,300,000 acres) of California.

**Questions:** What advantages are there for introducing biological controls? In what other situations could biological controls be used?

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DEET
USDA scientists developed the widely used and highly effective insect repellent DEET for the armed forces during the 1950s.

“Today, DEET continues to be the most widely used insect repellent in the world, available in a number of consumer products that come in varying concentrations and forms, including gels, aerosol and pump sprays, sticks and lotions.”

**Questions:** Many inventions and innovations are developed for military use and then transferred to the consumer market. What are some examples of these products? How are they transferred to consumers? How does the military encourage development of products that will be beneficial to the armed forces?

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*Growing a Nation: Prosperity & Challenges*
Lesson 3: 1950-1969, Screen 5, Embedded Resource 1

*Growing a Nation: Prosperity & Challenges*

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*Source:* ARS Timeline: 138 Years of Ag Research, U.S. Department of Agriculture [online].

Eisenhower: foreign and domestic policy

“Eisenhower did not want to roll back history, junking federal policies that in his view had proven successful. As he told his brother Edgar during an unguarded moment, ‘Should any political party attempt to abolish Social Security, unemployment insurance, and eliminate labor laws and farm programs, you would not hear of that party again in our political history.’ He was in fact willing to strengthen those federal programs that had good track records and even to introduce new measures on a selective basis. But at the same time, he wanted to prune programs such as those in public power and agricultural subsidies, whose costs he thought far outweighed their benefits to the nation. If successful, he would slow and perhaps even stop the growth of the administrative state. This was his concept of the Middle Way.

“Eisenhower’s effort to stem the expansion of the federal government was one in a long series of such forays that began with the end of the New Deal in the late 1930s.

“Since 1952 American voters have elected relatively conservative Republican presidents in six of the ten elections, and while Congress has often been a Democratic preserve, a loose coalition of conservative Democrats and Republicans has dampened many of the efforts to extend federal power.

“Eisenhower’s presidency was part of this much broader political epic played out against the backdrop of the Cold War. In dealing with that struggle, Eisenhower was intensely committed to the policy of containing communism by deploying economic and military aid, by forming defensive alliances, and by threatening to exercise—and when all else failed, by exercising—U.S. military power.

“The president, his advisers, and key congressional leaders cooperated in keeping the containment strategy viable. The presidents who followed would have similar opportunities. Some would come dangerously close to losing a grip on containment. But in the 1980s that policy would finally achieve its primary goal. The collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union brought to a sudden and stunning close that long phase of world diplomacy and seems to have vindicated Eisenhower’s successful efforts to preserve the Western Alliance and wait out its communist adversaries.

“Eisenhower’s role in these two historical transitions helps explain the astonishing change that has taken place in scholarly evaluations of his presidency. Contemporary appraisals of the Eisenhower presidency were for the most part critical. The administration’s domestic policy in particular aroused criticism, as did the Eisenhower style of leadership. Many of the White House initiatives had a negative tone after all, the main thrust of the Middle Way was to stop the growth of the federal government, a policy that was not likely to bring scholars out of their seats cheering.”

Questions: Why was Eisenhower confident in the eventual collapse of European Communism? What motivations did he have for being cautious about cutting farm programs?

Era 9: Postwar United States, Standard IC
Source: Louis Galambos and Daun van Ee, “A President’s First Term: Eisenhower’s Pursuit of ‘the Middle Way,’” Humanities, National Endowment for the Humanities [online].
Pesticide Safety
In the 1940s, pesticides were among the innovations science brought to agriculture to control crop losses due to insects, disease, and weeds. These new human-made pesticides were chemicals that farmers had not used before, and they needed instruction about how to use them safely. Watch this 1960s film about pesticide safety and consider the following questions.

Questions: Why do people use pesticides? Why is it important to be careful with pesticides? Will using twice the recommended dosage of pesticides or a medicine to kill or cure provide better results? What can happen to people and their environment if they use too much pesticide or apply it improperly?

Era 9: Postwar United States, Standard 1C
Source: Film Safe Use of Pesticide, 1963, courtesy of U.S. National Archives and Records Administration.

Agricultural Research Service
Since the establishment of the Department of Agriculture (USDA) in 1862, research had been one of its major functions, but it had been carried out by numerous separate bureaus and agencies. During a major reorganization of the USDA, the department placed all of its research activities under one agency by establishing the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) on November 2, 1953. Visit the ARS website to learn about current agricultural research.

Questions: Why would the USDA create an entire organization that focuses solely on agricultural research? How does the ARS obtain funding for its research? What type of agricultural research would you like to see the ARS undertake?

Era 9: Postwar United States, Standard 1C
ars.usda.gov/aboutus/aboutus.htm
Interstate Highway System

People traveling in the United States today may find it difficult to imagine our country without the Dwight D. Eisenhower System of Interstate and Defense Highways.

Our national highway system came about largely due to the efforts of President Eisenhower. As a young army officer, Eisenhower traveled cross-country during the 1919 Transcontinental Convoy, where he first saw the need and potential advantages of an interstate road system.

Later, when Eisenhower served as Supreme Commander of Allied Forces in Europe during World War II, he was impressed by the ease of travel on the German autobahn highway system. He saw the benefits a multilane highway system would have in building a strong national defense.

As President, Eisenhower signed the Federal Aid Highway Act on June 29, 1956, which created the interstate system we rely on today.

Questions: How did the building of interstate highways help unite the country? What value does America’s freeway system add to the nation? To the economy?

Era 9: Postwar United States, Standard 1C

USAID

The United States has a long history of providing emergency food assistance to foreign countries following natural disasters and wartime famines. In 1954, President Eisenhower laid the foundation for a permanent U.S. food assistance program by signing Public Law 480 into law. This law, still in effect today, allows the government to send American farm surpluses abroad to help countries facing food shortages. President Eisenhower said, “Food can be a powerful instrument for all the free world in building a durable peace.”

Questions: Do you think food relief can enhance the possibilities for world peace? What events demonstrate that violence can occur when food is scarce? Do other countries provide aid to less fortunate countries?

Era 9: Postwar United States, Standard 1C
President Eisenhower

When President Eisenhower was criticized for his farm programs, his brother wrote him a letter, saying, “I am sick of paying the farmer money for his product, wasting that product, and then paying him a higher price for what he puts in the market!” Like many other critics of the government’s farm programs, Eisenhower’s brother argued that Americans were basically paying farmers to overproduce and then further subsidizing farmers by paying artificially high prices instead of letting supply and demand determine the price of farm products.

**Questions:** What was the purpose of the government’s active support of farming? How does this role affect those who don’t live in rural areas? Is it possible that the government helps farmers too much? Not enough?

Era 9: Postwar United States, Standard 1C


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**Insecticides**

As the result of wartime research, new highly effective insecticides became available following World War II. These insecticides were widely adopted during the 1950s to combat insect pests, such as many species of grasshoppers that are destructive to agricultural crops.

“In some parts of the West, grasshoppers, which seem so harmless when they leap out of sight at our presence, can reach population densities that might seem supernatural.

“While they’re a food source for many wildlife and bird species, grasshoppers, at times, can number in the hundreds of millions in states like Colorado, Wyoming, and California. At outbreak densities, they gobble up valuable forage from rangelands used by livestock and compete with wildlife on native grasslands. Damage from the insect—which can eat half its weight in a day—can reach $390 million a year.”

**Questions:** Who should bear the burden of responsibility for taking care of insect and other problems? What else do you think the government should do to assist farmers?

Era 9: Postwar United States, Standard 1C

Plant physiologists
“A plant physiologist studies the life processes in plants. Plants look like they basically just sit there in the soil. But they can be very busy with photosynthesis, taking in carbon dioxide and giving off oxygen, and responding to light, temperature, moisture, insect pests and chemicals to name only a very few. A plant physiologist might specialize in one particular process or become an expert in one particular plant.”

**Questions:** Why do some scientists devote their life’s work to understanding just one process or plant? What kind of dedication does it take to become an expert in a field of study? Why are plant experts valuable to the USDA and the agriculture industry?

Era 9: Postwar United States, Standard 1C

Dwight D. Eisenhower
Dwight D. Eisenhower took the oath of office as the thirty-fourth American President in January of 1953. He brought with him the tremendous stature and leadership skills he had earned as the former Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in Europe during World War II. Visit the White House’s website to read his brief biography, then answer the following questions.

**Questions:** What was President Eisenhower’s campaign slogan? Why did it appeal to most Americans? How do you think President Eisenhower’s former career as a professional soldier contributed to his success as President?

Era 9: Postwar United States, Standard 1C
whitehouse.gov/history/presidents/de34.html
Screwworm
The screwworm is a fly that lays its eggs in wounds on living animals. When the eggs hatch, the larvae eat the flesh of the animal, causing infections and sickness. Until the 1950s, the only way to control screwworms was with the use of pesticides, but this was not very effective, and livestock producers were losing millions of dollars each year because of the screwworm. The USDA’s Agricultural Research Service found a way to eliminate screwworms by using radiation to prevent them from reproducing. This exterminated the screwworm population in the United States, and the USDA encouraged Mexico and some Central American nations to use the same method, protecting the U.S. from being reinfected. Watch this 1970s film to learn more about the life cycle of screwworms.

Questions: What is the purpose of this film? Why was it important to eliminate the screwworm in America? Are invasive species a problem today?

Sources: Text adapted from USDA APHIS News and Info: Screwworm, February 2002 (online); film The Screwworm, excerpt 2, c. 1975, courtesy of U.S. Department of Agriculture and Agricultural Research Service, available on CD-ROM STOP Screwworms: Selections from the Screwworm Eradication Collection, Special Collections, National Agricultural Library, April 2000.

Food for Peace
President Kennedy renamed Public Law 480 the “Food-for-Peace” program. For more than fifty years, this food assistance program has helped hundreds of countries and hundreds of millions of people in need. One author wrote:

“Shipments under Public Law 480 averaged nearly $1.5 billion annually in the Kennedy years. This assistance not only played a notable humanitarian role in averting mass starvation in India, Egypt, Algeria and other nations but the use of food as wage carried it beyond a relief program to serve, in effect, as a means of financing development.”

Questions: How could U.S. agriculture help other countries develop? How was food used as “wage” in these struggling countries? Is it right that America provides food to the world?

Era 9: Postwar United States, Standard 1C
John F. Kennedy
John F. Kennedy became the thirty-fifth President on January 20, 1961. Just three years later, on November 22, 1963, he was shot and killed. Visit the White House's website to read a brief biography, and then answer the following questions.

Questions: Why did John Kennedy’s assassination have such a profound impact on Americans? Why does his legacy continue in America?

Era 9: Postwar United States, Standard 1C
whitehouse.gov/history/presidents/jk35.html

Food stamp benefits
Below is a list of the things food stamp recipients may or may not buy using food stamps. Households may use food stamp benefits to buy foods for the household to eat, such as:

- breads and cereals
- fruits and vegetables
- meats, fish, and poultry
- dairy products
- seeds and plants that produce food for the household to eat.

Households may not use food stamp benefits to buy:

- beer, wine, liquor, cigarettes, or tobacco
- pet foods
- soaps, paper products, and household supplies
- vitamins and medicines
- food that will be eaten in the store
- hot foods.

Questions: How do you think the USDA determined which products would be eligible for purchase through the food stamp program? Do you think that all foods should be eligible for purchase through the program? Why or why not?

Era 9: Postwar United States, Standard 1C
Women, infants, and children
“The mission of the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) is to safeguard the health of low-income women, infants, and children up to age 5 who are at nutrition risk. WIC provides nutritious foods to supplement diets, nutrition education, and referrals to health care and other social services. Administered by USDA’s Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), the program has grown rapidly since 1972.

“Almost half of all infants and about one-quarter of all children 1-4 years of age in the United States now participate. WIC accounts for almost 12 percent of total Federal spending on food and nutrition assistance.”

**Question:** Why has the government assumed responsibility to safeguard the health of low-income women, infants, and children?

Era 9: Postwar United States, Standard 1C

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**Unemployment rates**
This graph shows unemployment rates from 1970 through 2000.

**Questions:** What trends do you see in this graph? How many individuals and families are represented by these trends? What responsibility does the government have for aiding those who are affected by unemployment?

Era 9: Postwar United States, Standard 1C
Source: Economagic.com [online].

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**School Lunch**
Watch this film to learn more about the school lunch program in the “space age.”

**Questions:** Why do you think the USDA and Congress created the school lunch program? How does the program affect American agriculture, the economy, and nutrition? Would you rather eat school lunch or bring lunch from home?

Era 9: Postwar United States, Standard 1C
Source: Film School Lunch, undated, courtesy of U.S. National Archives and Records Administration.
Lyndon B. Johnson
Lyndon B. Johnson, the thirty-sixth President of the United States, served from 1963 to 1969. Visit the White House’s website to read a brief biography, and then answer the following questions.

Questions: What do you think are the most important accomplishments of the Johnson administration? What aspects of President Johnson’s life are most interesting to you? Why?

Era 9: Postwar United States, Standard 3B
whitehouse.gov/about/presidents/lyndonbjohnson

The Great Society
After visiting the From Revolution to Reconstruction website and reading about President Johnson and the Great Society, answer the following questions.

Questions: Why was President Johnson’s program called “the Great Society”? How great was the “Great Society”?

Era 9: Postwar United States, Standard 1C
odur.let.rug.nl/~usa/H/1994/ch12_p2.htm
Making fabrics friendly

"With the cessation of World War II, cotton markets were being usurped by synthetics. The marketing war’s opening round was the advent of rayon strong enough for use in tire cords. Soon tire makers began switching from cotton to its lower priced competitor, dispossession growers of an annual market for 1 million bales of cotton.

"Another inroad into cotton markets followed the introduction of men’s shirts made of synthetic fibers that needed little or no ironing. Concurrently, nylon was laying siege to markets for women’s garments and for many household items that cotton had traditionally filled.

"ARS [Agricultural Research Service] chemists and engineers at the Southern Regional Research Center in New Orleans, along with colleagues in industry, launched a broad-based research campaign to close the gap. Before long, progress in research began to bolster cotton’s competitive position.

"A series of basic discoveries involving resins resulted in cotton fabrics that behaved like synthetics when washed and hung to dry, yet retained such desirable qualities as comfort and resistance to soiling. Work in laboratories was further accelerated at about this time when major shirt makers raised their research budgets on learning that many people considered synthetic shirts to be wanting in comfort.

"From this effort of the 1950’s came the first wash-and-wear cotton shirts that required only touch-up ironing. Next came shirts, pants, and other clothing made from a new blend of 35 percent cotton with 65 percent synthetics. These garments had permanent creases and, after washing and either tumble- or drip-drying, required no ironing.

"But the New Orleans scientists refused to settle for shirts, underwear, and sportswear limited to only 35 percent cotton. Contending that garments of all cotton were more durable than those made from the blend, they stepped up their efforts. They succeeded. Since 1965 consumers have been able to buy all-cotton shirts that are durable yet look newly pressed after repeated launderings and dryings.

"The key to making cotton wash-and-wear or durable press, as it is now called is to treat it with a chemical solution which reacts with the long molecules that compose cotton fiber. The treatment ‘crosslinks’ or ties the molecules together so that the fabric will dry smooth after laundering. Today durable-press textiles are providing an annual market for an estimated 2.5 million bales of cotton that otherwise would not be sold.

"But durable-press cottons account for only a part of the New Orleans lab’s total textile research program. Over the years researchers there have created a succession of processes and products. These include a host of new finishing and crosslinking agents to make fabrics last longer and resist wrinkling, soilng, and damage by bleaches weather-resistant canvases for such varied products as tents, tarpaulins, and beach umbrellas and flame-retardant fabrics for clothing fire fighters and foundry workers, bed linens for hospitals and institutions, and linings for high-pressure chambers for nursing blue babies after surgery.

"All these and many other research achievements have helped win markets for cotton. To the general public, however, the towering triumph in textile research undoubtedly is durable-press cotton. It is liberating the masses from countless hours of drudgery at the ironing board."

Questions: Why do you think USDA scientists spend resources to find better natural fiber fabrics? Do you think it is important for scientists to perform such research? Why or why not?

Era 9: Postwar United States, Standard 1C
Rural poverty
This graph shows that the number of Americans living in poverty is greater in rural areas than in urban areas.

Questions: Why do you think there is more poverty in rural areas than urban areas? What should or can be done to lessen poverty in rural areas?

SuperSlurper
"Starch is the main constituent of grain flours, and the most plentiful starch is cornstarch. Although most of the products from corn milling go into food and feed, 4.5 billion pounds of starch are annually produced, largely for nonfood purposes. Of this amount, 3.5 billion pounds are used in the paperboard, paper, and related industries, where starch serves both as an adhesive and a coating.

“And new uses for cornstarch continue to surprise us. For example, when ARS scientists married starch to a synthetic chemical, they managed to create a product so thirsty, it could absorb hundreds of times its own weight in water. Someone called it SuperSlurper, and the name stuck.

“After patents were secured in 1976, SuperSlurper started popping up all over the marketplace. The absorbent compound, which can slurp up to 2,000 times its weight in water, is used as an electrical conductor in batteries. You can find it in fuel filters, baby powders, and wound dressings. Compounds very much like it are now used in disposable diapers and sanitary napkins.”

Questions: How has your life been affected by the SuperSlurper invention? What other agricultural inventions have impacted your life?
Caesar Chavez
Caesar Chavez was a Mexican immigrant who became a political activist with the goal of improving the lives of migrant agricultural workers. Watch this film to learn more about his efforts.

Questions: What made Chavez a good leader? What problems face immigrant workers today? What contributions do Mexican immigrants make to our nation and economy? What are some of the methods immigrants have used to try to improve their conditions?

Era 9: Postwar United States, Standard 1C
Source: Film Vision USA, No. 82, 1979, courtesy of U.S. National Archives and Records Administration.

Earth Day
The first Earth Day was organized in 1970 as a way to encourage people around the world to celebrate the Earth and to remind all people of their responsibility to care for the Earth. Visit the Earth Day Network website to learn more about this organization.

Questions: How do celebrations such as Earth Day help bring about important change and progress? What can you do to help protect and conserve the Earth’s resources?

Era 9: Postwar United States, Standard 1C
www.earthday.org/about

Environmental Protection Agency
At the request of President Richard M. Nixon, Congress established the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), on December 2, 1970. The EPA’s mission includes:

“The establishment and enforcement of environmental protection standards consistent with national environmental goals. . . . The conduct of research on the adverse effects of pollution and on methods and equipment for controlling it[,] the gathering of information on pollution and the use of this information in strengthening environmental protection programs and recommending policy changes . . . assisting others, through grants, technical assistance and other means, in arresting pollution of the environment . . . assisting the Council on Environmental Quality in developing and recommending to the President new policies for the protection of the environment.”

Questions: Why was it important for President Nixon to establish the Environmental Protection Agency? How does the EPA affect your life?

Era 9: Postwar United States, Standard 1C
Source: “How and When Was the EPA Created?” U.S. Environmental Protection Agency [online].
Rachel Carson
April 2002 marked the fortieth anniversary of the publication of Rachel Carson’s groundbreaking book, *Silent Spring*. With its publication, Carson helped launch the environmental movement. Visit the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service website to learn more about her life and contributions.

**Questions:** Why were Rachel Carson’s views so controversial for so long? What impact does her writing continue to have today?

Era 9: Postwar United States, Standard 1C
rachelcarson.fws.gov/carsonbio.html

Clean Water Act

“Growing public awareness and concern for controlling water pollution led to enactment of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act Amendments of 1972. As amended in 1977, this law became commonly known as the Clean Water Act. The Act established the basic structure for regulating discharges of pollutants into the waters of the United States. It gave EPA the authority to implement pollution control programs such as setting wastewater standards for industry. The Clean Water Act also continued requirements to set water quality standards for all contaminants in surface waters. The Act made it unlawful for any person to discharge any pollutant from a point source into navigable waters, unless a permit was obtained under its provisions. It also funded the construction of sewage treatment plants under the construction grants program and recognized the need for planning to address the critical problems posed by nonpoint source pollution.

“Subsequent enactments modified some of the earlier Clean Water Act provisions. Revisions in 1981 streamlined the municipal construction grants process, improving the capabilities of treatment plants built under the program. Changes in 1987 phased out the construction grants program, replacing it with the State Water Pollution Control Revolving Fund, more commonly known as the Clean Water State Revolving Fund. This new funding strategy addressed water quality needs by building on EPA-State partnerships.

“Over the years, many other laws have changed parts of the Clean Water Act. Title I of the Great Lakes Critical Programs Act of 1990, for example, put into place parts of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement of 1978, signed by the U.S. and Canada, where the two nations agreed to reduce certain toxic pollutants in the Great Lakes. That law required EPA to establish water quality criteria for the Great Lakes addressing 29 toxic pollutants with maximum levels that are safe for humans, wildlife, and aquatic life. It also required EPA to help the States implement the criteria on a specific schedule.”

**Questions:** Why was it important for the U.S. Congress to establish the Clean Water Act? Do you think there is a need today for a Clean Water Act in America? Why or why not?

Era 10: Contemporary United States, Standard 1A
**Growing a Nation: Prosperity & Challenges**

**Tracking the elusive viroid**
Research in the 1960s and 1970s produced many interesting results. One was the discovery of a small virus-like organism eighty times smaller than a virus. Named a “viroid” by USDA scientist Theodor O. Diener, who first found it, the discovery of this entirely new pathogen helped scientists better understand disease-causing organisms.

**Questions:** How can agriculture benefit from intensive research? How would you feel if your crop were being attacked by an unknown disease?

*Era 10: Contemporary United States, Standard 1A
htars.usda.gov/is/timeline/viroid.htm*

**Growing a Nation: Prosperity & Challenges**
Lesson 3: 1950-1969, Screen 9, Embedded Resource 6

**The War on Hunger**
Orville Freeman, Secretary of Agriculture under President Johnson, speaks about hunger in this late 1960s film. Throughout history, many people in developing countries have gone hungry, even while other nations have an agricultural surplus. Many wealthy countries have tried different strategies to help those who are hungry. Watch this film to hear one opinion on how America should help other nations.

**Questions:** What factors can lead to food shortages? What role should America play in helping developing nations? Do you agree or disagree with Secretary Freeman? Is it better to give people food or to teach them to grow their own? How does this decision affect the American economy and trade?

*Source: Film War on Hunger, 1968, courtesy of U.S. National Archives and Records Administration.*

**Growing a Nation: Prosperity & Challenges**
Lesson 3: 1950-1969, Screen 10, Embedded Resource 1

**Richard Nixon**
Richard Nixon was sworn in as the thirty-seventh President in January 1969. Although his administration accomplished much, the Watergate scandal overshadowed the presidency and eventually led to Nixon’s resignation. Visit the White House’s website to read a brief biography of President Richard Nixon, and then answer the following questions.

**Questions:** What do you think are the most important accomplishments of the Nixon administration? What caused the downfall of President Nixon and his administration?

*Era 10: Contemporary United States, Standard 1A
whitehouse.gov/history/presidents/rn37.html*
Barbara McClintock
Barbara McClintock was a brilliant American geneticist and Nobel Laureate. During 1948–1950, McClintock developed a radical theory that answered a fundamental question of genetics: how complex organisms developed different kinds of cells and tissues when each cell in the organism had the same set of genes. In 1983, at the age of eighty-one, Barbara McClintock received the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine “for her discovery of mobile genetic elements,” more than thirty years after first developing her theory.

Questions: What was significant about McClintock’s life? What was significant about her achievements? How did the fact that she was a woman affect her career?
Food and Nutrition Service

“On May 6, 1969, the President sent a message to Congress outlining the problem facing the Nation and making recommendations for action by the Congress and governmental agencies to eliminate hunger and malnutrition and insure a healthful diet for all Americans. The President stated, ‘So accustomed are most of us to a full and balanced diet that, until recently, we have thought of hunger and malnutrition as problems only in far less fortunate counties.

“But in the past few years we have awakened to the distressing fact that despite our material abundance and agricultural wealth, many Americans suffer from malnutrition. Precise factual descriptions of its extent are not presently available, but there can be no doubt that hunger and malnutrition exist in America, and that some millions may be affected. For them, there must be first sufficient food income. But this alone would only begin to address the problem, for what matters finally is what people buy with the money they have. People must be educated in the choosing of proper foods. All of us, poor and non-poor alike, must be reminded that a proper diet is a basic determinant of good health.’

“The President went on to state further, ‘More is at stake here than the health and well-being of 16 million American citizens who will be aided by these programs and the current child food assistance programs. Something very like the honor of American democracy is at issue. . . . America has come to the aid of one starving people after another. But the moment is at hand to put an end to hunger in America itself for all time. I ask this of a Congress that has already splendidly demonstrated its own disposition to act. It is a moment to act with vigor; it is a moment to be recalled with pride.’

“At the President’s direction, the Food and Nutrition Service was created as a new agency within the Department of Agriculture exclusively to administer Federal food programs, including the school lunch program, and other agencies involved were directed to coordinate their activities with those of the Department of Agriculture.

“On December 2, 1969, the President reasserted the problem as he addressed the opening plenary session of the White House Conference on Food, Nutrition and Health. He said, ‘Experts can argue—and they do—and you will—about the magnitude of the problem; about how many are hungry, how many malnourished, and how severely they are malnourished. Precise statistical data remain elusive and often contradictory. However, Dr. Arnold Schaefer, the man in charge of the National Nutrition Survey, recently made this cautious but forceful observation: “We have been alerted by recent studies that our population who are malnutrition risks is beyond anticipated findings, and also that in some of our vulnerable population groups—preschool children, the aged, teen-agers, and the poor—malnutrition is indeed a serious medical problem.” We can argue its extent. But hunger exists. We can argue its severity, but malnutrition exists. . . . In a related matter, we already are greatly expanding our school lunch programs, with the target of reaching every needy school child with a free or reduced-cost lunch by the end of the current fiscal year.’

“Various panels of the White House Conference recommended expansion of the school lunch program to the extent that every schoolchild shall have the lunch available to him, and that every needy child shall be provided a lunch (and breakfast under certain circumstances) free or at reduced price when unable to pay the full price.”

**Questions:** Was the government right to expand the school lunch program to every schoolchild? Why or why not? How would your life be different had the school lunch program not been available to you?

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**Era 10: Contemporary United States, Standard 1C**

Fewer farms
This graph shows the rise and eventual decline in the number of farms in America.

Questions: Why do you think the number of farms has been declining? What is happening to America’s farms? How might life in America change as the number of farms continues to decline?

Era 10: Contemporary United States, Standard 2A

The task of government
At the 1969 White House Conference on Food, Nutrition, and Health, President Richard Nixon said, “The task of government is not to make decisions for you or for anyone. The task of government is to enable you to make decisions for yourself. Not to see the truth of that statement is fundamentally to mistake the genius of democracy.”

Questions: Do you agree with his statement? Why or why not?

Era 10: Contemporary United States, Standard 2A
Source: Sylvia Rowe, Perspectives for Future Actions, International Food Information Council, National Institute of Health [online].

Erosion on the decline
The rate of soil erosion by water on American farms has been reduced by more than 40 percent since 1982.

Questions: How has the soil erosion rate been so greatly reduced over the past several decades? Why is the rate of soil erosion important to America?

Era 10: Contemporary United States, Standard 2A
Growing a Nation: Prosperity & Challenges
Lesson 3: 1950-1969, Screen 11, Embedded Resource 1

The Earth’s future
This photograph of the Earth rising over the moon was taken from the Apollo 11 spacecraft while it orbited the moon in July 1969.

Questions: What can you learn about planet Earth from this photograph? What would happen to humankind if we irreparably damaged our planet? From the distance of space, what resources appear to be the most abundant on Earth? How do the resources of our planet compare to the resources found on the moon or other planets orbiting our sun?

Growing a Nation: Prosperity & Challenges

The green revolution
“The genes that sparked the Green Revolution came from unprepossessing wheat plants relegated to the ranks of agronomic curiosities. But their short, stiff straw and heavy seed heads caught the eye of ARS agronomist S. Cecil Salmon who was with Gen. Douglas MacArthur’s headquarters in 1946 helping assess Japan’s postwar agricultural problems. Salmon acquired seeds of 16 different strains including one named Norin No. 10 for the World Small Grain Collection in Beltsville, Md.

“Within a year, the Collection processed and distributed the seeds to various U.S. wheat breeders. Some went to ARS-Washington State University breeders in Pullman. The Pullman team, led by ARS plant breeder Orville Vogel, analyzed the seeds’ initial progeny for strengths and weaknesses. Over the next 13 years the scientists made many hybrid crosses and selections. One of the wheat varieties that came out of these efforts was the famed short-strawed Gaines.

“While hybridization was underway, Norman E. Borlaug of the International Maize and Wheat Research Centre, Mexico, visited Pullman and was impressed with the short-stalked wheat’s potential. The group shared germplasm with Borlaug who, in turn, crossed it with Mexico’s best wheats.

“In 1963 Borlaug responded to an urgent request from the government of India to tour its major wheat-growing regions and provide breeders with lines containing Norin No. 10 dwarfing genes. The tall native wheats had encountered an insurmountable yield barrier. When heavily fertilized with nitrogen, they grew too high, became top-heavy, and lodged.

“Borlaug’s semidwarf wheats enabled India to finally launch its Green Revolution. The combination of new genes, fertilizer, and irrigation spurred wheat production from 12 million metric tons in 1965 to over 20 million in 1970 and over 37 million last year. Since the new wheats were broadly

...continued on next page
adapted, Green Revolutions also took hold in countries sharing similar latitudes, such as Pakistan, Turkey, and Afghanistan. For his contributions, Borlaug was awarded the Nobel Prize.

“Arid regions of India also benefited from a Green Revolution, one based on hybrid pearl millets. But an obstacle to hybridization had to be overcome first because many grasses, including millets, self-pollinate. ARS geneticist Glenn Burton altered pearl millet’s cytoplasm to create the cytoplasmic male-sterile plants that made hybrids possible. In 1961, Burton sent male-sterile millet seeds to India for its breeding programs. By 1965 the Indian scientists developed a new hybrid that out-yielded native varieties by 88 percent. In that year, India produced 3.5 million tons of millet. Just 5 years later, millet production climbed to 8 million tons. That gain in yield accounted for 20 percent of the extra food production in India’s Green Revolution.

“Plant breeders rely on the collection and preservation of still-extant germplasm. A major effort is underway to save from extinction not only the seeds of plants now cultivated but also their wild relatives with rich and irreplaceable genetic qualities from resistance to disease and drought to higher yields. A wide variety of genetic material is essential if breeders are to improve and perpetuate the world’s crops.

“Two internationally known facilities are maintained by ARS to help foster genetic diversity. The World Small Grain Collection, which can be traced to informal origins in the 1870’s, serves as a ‘working’ collection. It collects, maintains, distributes, and evaluates germplasm to meet the ongoing needs of plant breeders everywhere. At present, the Collection maintains some 102,000 strains of wheat, barley, oats, rice, rye, and triticale.

“On the other hand, the National Seed Storage Laboratory (NSSL), Fort Collins, Colo., is a ‘base’ collection. It maintains, mostly in cold-storage rooms, over 200,000 separate collections of seed and vegetative stock. Some collections were obtained by expeditions to remote lands. Although the NSSL’s germplasm may duplicate that in working collections, it releases material only when it is not available elsewhere. Its prime mission is to perpetually safeguard germplasm, an ultimate gene bank for the plant breeders working to help feed the world’s burgeoning population.”

Questions: What were some of the small discoveries that ultimately led to the great breakthrough that became the “green revolution”? Do you think the scientists who made each of these small discoveries understood at the time the importance of their work? Why or why not? Why is the work of these scientists referred to as a revolution? What different career fields are mentioned in the story?

Era 10: Contemporary United States, Standard 1C
Source: ARS Timeline: 138 Years of Ag Research, U.S. Department of Agriculture [online].
Norman E. Borlaug
Visit this website at Tuskegee University and review the article “Ending World Hunger: The Promise of Biotechnology and the Threat of Antiscience Zealotry” by Dr. Norman E. Borlaug. In the conclusion to his article, Dr. Borlaug makes the statement and poses the question, “I now say that the world has the technology that is either available or well advanced in the research pipeline to feed a population of 10 billion people. The more pertinent question today is: Will farmers and ranchers be permitted to use this new technology?”

Questions: Why does Dr. Borlaug think farmers and ranchers will not be allowed to use biotechnology to solve world hunger problems? Whom does Dr. Borlaug accuse of being “anti-science”? Why does he disagree with those who would prohibit the use of biotechnology? Do you agree or disagree with Dr. Borlaug’s views? Why or why not?

Era 10: Contemporary United States, Standard 1C
plantphysiol.org/content/124/2/487.full

Emergency relief
For many decades, the United States has provided emergency relief supplies to other nations during times of crisis through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). This photograph shows Red Crescent workers in Sudan bagging green split peas for the people of Darfur, Sudan affected by civil war.

Questions: Why do you think the United States provides supplies to people in areas of the world where conflict is occurring? How might the government’s action in giving food to nations at war impact American agriculture? What impact would it have on American agriculture if poorer nations, currently unable to feed themselves, become successful and efficient producers of food not only for their own people but also for export?

Era 10: Contemporary United States, Standard 2A

Biodiversity
Despite the good that has come from the green revolution, there have also been criticisms of its consequences. Review the information in the article “Agriculture and Genetic Diversity” at the National Biological Information Infrastructure website.

Questions: What is biodiversity? How can biodiversity be preserved? How does the definition of sustainable agriculture conflict with the agriculture methods of the green revolution? How might the goals of the green revolution be met through biodiversity?

Era 10: Contemporary United States, Standard 2A
p.wikipedia.org/wiki/Green_Revolution

Growing a Nation: Prosperity & Challenges

Growing a Nation: Prosperity & Challenges
Lesson 3: 1950-1969, Screen 11, Embedded Resource 4

Growing a Nation: Prosperity & Challenges
Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service

“CSREES’ unique mission is to advance knowledge for agriculture, the environment, human health and well-being, and communities by supporting research, education, and extension programs in the Land-Grant University System and other partner organizations. CSREES doesn’t perform actual research, education, and extension but rather helps fund it at the state and local level and provides program leadership in these areas.

“CSREES has 59 targeted areas of interest that are grouped in the following National Emphasis Areas:

- Agricultural & Food Biosecurity
- Agricultural Systems
- Animals & Animal Products
- Biotechnology & Genomics
- Economics & Commerce
- Families, Youth & Communities
- Food, Nutrition & Health
- Natural Resources & Environment
- Pest Management
- Plants & Plant Products
- Technology & Engineering

“CSREES and its partners focus on critical issues affecting people’s daily lives and the nation’s future. The advanced research and educational technologies we support empower people and communities to solve problems and improve their lives on the local level.

“CSREES does its work through an extensive network of state, regional, and county extension offices in every U.S. state and territory. These offices have educators and other staff who respond to public inquiries and conduct informal, noncredit workshops and other educational events. You’re connected to this system which is now 90 years old through your nearest extension office, which provides answers to commonly encountered problems through educational materials (print, video, CD), Web-based information, the telephone, and other means.

“With support from more than 600,000 volunteers, 4-H, USDA’s 102-year-old youth development program administered through CSREES engages more than 6.5 million young people every year and teaches them life skills through hands-on learning and leadership activities.”

Questions: How might the work of this government agency impact your life? Why is it important that the government fund and support research for agriculture? Why are universities a critical partner for conducting agricultural research that is funded by the government? What areas of research conducted by this agency interest you the most?

Era 10: Contemporary United States, Standard 2A
Source: “CSREES Background,” Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service [online].