

# VA/US History & Honors VA/US History

(High School Virginia & United States History)

**Learning in Place, Phase II**

**April 6-10, 20-24**



**Norfolk Public Schools**  
The cornerstone of a proudly diverse community

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**School:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Teacher:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Virginia & United States History & Honors VAUS History (VAUS HIST) Learning in Place, Phase II**

**April 6-10**

✓	Task	Text	Write
	Describe the impact of the GI Bill.	Passage 1	1. In complete sentences, explain how the passage of the GI bill helped veterans.
	Describe the impact of the development of the Interstate Highway System.	Passage 2	2. In complete sentences, explain how the passage of the Federal Highway Act impacted the American economy.
	Describe the impact of LBJ's "Great Society" and the "War on Poverty."	Passage 3	3. As you read Passage 3, underline factors that led to LBJ's legislative success, and highlight legislative accomplishments of LBJ. 4. After reading Passages 1, 2, and 3, write a summary of legislation passed after World War II, including the GI Bill, the Federal Highway Act, and LBJ's "Great Society" laws, and explain how each impacted the ability of the United States to adapt and expand after the war. The response, if typed, should be at least 2 pages and no more than 3 pages, 12-point font, double-spaced. If handwritten, the response should be at least 4 pages and no more than 6 pages, single-spaced.

**April 20-24**

✓	Task	Text	Write
	What is the impact of the ESEA?	Passage 4	1. <b>As you read:</b> Underline provisions of the ESEA and other educational legislation that has branched from its passing. 2. <b>After you read:</b> Give examples of how you see the ESEA (and other legislation) in action here in Norfolk Public Schools. Interview a family member and/or friend and ask how he or she sees the impact of the ESEA and other educational legislation. The interview may be face-to-face (in practicing with social distancing), over the phone, or online. Write a summary of your findings. The summary should be at least 1 page, if typed (12-point font, double-spaced) or 2 pages, if handwritten (single-spaced)
	How did the rise of suburbs highlight disparities in equality?	Passage 5	3. Answer the following in paragraph form (one paragraph each): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What factors led to the growth of suburbs in the United States?</li> <li>How did the rise of suburbs highlight disparities in equality?</li> <li>What actions has the US government taken to eliminate this disparity?</li> </ol>

## Passage 1

### The GI Bill (adapted from History.com)

The assimilation of World War I veterans back to civilian life didn't go well. With so many men flooding the labor market, many couldn't make ends meet, even with help from government programs. Congress stepped in and passed the Bonus Act of 1924, which promised veterans a bonus based on number of days served. But it wouldn't be paid until 1945, almost 20 years later, much too late to help countless struggling veterans. By 1932, during the Great Depression, around 20,000 frustrated veterans—known as Bonus Marchers—marched on the Capitol in Washington, D.C., demanding their bonus money. The government didn't capitulate, though, and President Herbert Hoover sent the Army to get them out, a move which pitted soldier against veteran. The confrontation would be an integral turning point in the crusade for veteran's rights.

### **The GI Bill is born**

President Franklin D. Roosevelt was determined to do better for veterans returning from World War II. He also wanted to expand the middle class and help prevent economic turmoil. He started preparing for the veterans' return well in advance of the end of the war. Congress tossed around various ideas, but they limited benefits to veterans who met specific criteria such as income. It was former American Legion National Commander and Republican National Chairman, Harry W. Colmery, who proposed extending benefits to all World War II veterans, male or female. His proposal became the first draft of the GI Bill. The bill went to Congress in January 1944 as the war still raged along the European and Pacific fronts. It was hotly debated in both Congressional houses but finally approved in mid-June. President Roosevelt signed the GI Bill into law on June 22, 1944.

### **GI Bill Benefits**

The GI Bill gave World War II servicemen and servicewoman many options and benefits. Those who wished to continue their education in college or vocation school could do so tuition-free up to \$500 while also receiving a cost of living stipend. As a result, almost 49 percent of college admissions in 1947 were veterans. The GI Bill opened the door of higher education to the working class in a way never done before. The bill provided a \$20 weekly unemployment benefit for up to one year for veterans looking for work. Job counseling was also available.

The government guaranteed loans for veterans who borrowed money to purchase a home, business or farm. These loans enabled hordes of people to abandon city life and move to mass-produced, “cookie cutter” homes in suburbia. This exodus from major cities would help shape America’s socioeconomic and political landscape for years to come. Medical care for veterans was also provided in the GI Bill. Additional hospitals were established for veterans and the Veterans Administration took over all veteran-related concerns.

By 1956, almost 10 million veterans had received GI Bill benefits.

### **The GI Bill and Discrimination**

Although the GI Bill extended benefits to all veterans regardless of gender or race, it was easier for some people to collect than others. In many cases, benefits were administered by an all-white Veterans Administration at the state and local level. In an era of rampant racial and gender discrimination, African Americans and women struggled to receive higher education or loans. In some southern states, they were steered to menial jobs instead of college. Even if an African American received tuition money, their choices were slim since many colleges were segregated, especially in the southern states. African American veterans in the North fared somewhat better but still didn’t receive a higher education in numbers anywhere near their white peers. College choices for women were also slim since men almost always received enrollment preference.

The discrimination didn’t end with education. Local banks in the south often refused to lend money to African Americans to buy a home, even with the government backing the loan. And many of America’s new, suburban neighborhoods prohibited African American’s from moving in. As a result, many African Americans remained in the cities as whites flocked to the suburbs.

### **Post-9/11 GI Bill**

Mississippi Representative G.V. “Sonny” Montgomery proposed legislation in 1984 to make the GI Bill permanent. It insured that veterans of the Vietnam War could receive higher education. The Montgomery GI Bill is still in action today. It’s an opt-in program which offers help to veterans and service members with at least two years active duty. It also provides benefits to those in the Selected Reserve who meet specific criteria.

In 2008, Congress passed the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act, also called the Post-9/11 GI Bill. It gives veterans on active duty on September 11, 2001 or after greater educational benefits. It also allows them to transfer unused educational benefits to their spouse or kids.

## Passage 2



### ***History and cultural impact of the Interstate Highway System*** (adapted from the University of Vermont)

The Interstate Highway system, the seeds of which were planted in 1944, blossomed in 1956 with the passage of the **Federal Highway Act**. The bill was lobbied for heavily by a coalition of vehicle, oil, tire, cement, steel, and union interests and ironically, given its carbon footprint, championed by the elder Senator Albert Gore (Lewis 1997). This national system included over 46,000 miles of limited access highway - the largest and most expensive public works project ever undertaken (Kunstler 1993; Kaszynski 2000). The construction process was greatly expedited by the use of standardized designs and advance condemnation of properties along the Interstate right of way (Rose 1979; Kaszynski 2000). Although states participated in the construction of these roads, coordination, oversight, and funding were largely Federal (Vale and Vale 1983).

The first sections of the Interstate Highway system were opened less than a year after the bill's passage. The target date for finishing the system was 1969 (Kaszynski 2000) but it took a more than a decade longer before the entire Interstate Highway system was complete. In Vermont, Interstate Highway construction spanned four decades, the late '50s, '60s, '70s and early '80s.

The Interstate Highway system was designed to replace a mix of different road types with a network of multi-lane, limited-access roadways built to a uniform design specification (Kunstler 1993; Hayes 2005). The system was birthed of the Cold War, as the word "defense" in its title, The National System of Interstate and Defense Highways, reveals. Many suspect that Eisenhower's support for the road system was influenced by his war-time experiences with the German autobahn (Dicum 2004) and his difficult, two-month journey across America's primitive two-lane highways in 1919 as part of the War Department's Transcontinental Motor Convoy (Eisenhower 1967). By the late 1920s, a national network of paved two-lane roads was substantially complete (Liebs 1995) providing the first a real alternative to rail and water-based means of travel (Kaszynski 2000). The 1956 launch of the Interstate Highway system was the realization of a planning process for a national, limited-access road system that had begun in 1944, more than a decade earlier (Liebs 1995; Hayes 2005).

Interstate Highways were and are critical to the American economy. Construction of the Interstates followed an extended period of debate in the post-WWII era, spawned by increasingly costly traffic jams in urban and suburban areas caused at least in part by the increasing reliance on trucks for carrying heavy cargo (Rose 1979). Some argued that the automobile culture was the economy and that construction of the Interstate Highway system was a thinly disguised public works program designed to prevent a severe post-war recession or worse, the return of economic depression that characterized the pre-war decade (Rose 1979; Kunstler 1993). Core to the road-building philosophy was the belief that a prosperous society must be a mobile society and that the construction of roads, specifically Interstate Highways, could be a means to remove urban decay and promote prosperity. The Interstate Highway system, and associated feeder routes, were both heavily subsidized by the Federal government, with 90% of Interstate construction costs picked up by Washington (Rose 1979; Kunstler 1993). With urban roads being the costliest to build, cities received proportionally more Federal funds. Cars and highways are now a critical part of our economy and our culture. More than 85% of Americans take some form of motorized vehicular transportation back and forth to work.



### Passage 3

#### LYNDON BAINES JOHNSON AND THE GREAT SOCIETY

by Mike Kubic (2017) (excerpt)

Christmas of 1964 was an important occasion for Lyndon B. Johnson, the 36th president of the United States. Americans were still traumatized by the previous year's assassination of the greatly loved President John F. Kennedy, but in November 1964, Johnson, who had served as Kennedy's vice president, had won reelection with 61.1% of the vote — an all but unprecedented landslide.

On December 18, as he was about to light the White House Christmas tree, Johnson sought to comfort the nation by describing an American future that he hoped to make a reality: *“These are the most hopeful times in all the years since Christ was born in Bethlehem,”* he said. *“Today — as never before — man has in his possession the capacities to end war and preserve peace, to eradicate poverty and share abundance, to overcome the diseases that have afflicted the human race, and permit all mankind to enjoy their promise of life on this earth.”*

It sounded like an overhyped political oratory, but Johnson was uniquely qualified to try to live up to it. Senator Hubert Humphrey, who later became Johnson's vice president, said only half-jokingly that after getting the "Treatment," that he came out covered in several bodily fluids including blood, sweat, tears, and spit.

## **BUILDING THE GREAT SOCIETY**

It was a very ambitious aim, but as the *New York Times* wrote in 1964 after Johnson entered the White House with a 70% popular approval, the new president was "riding on the greatest economic boom in peacetime history."

The American Gross National Product rose from 1960 to 1964 a spectacular 25%; unemployment plummeted to 4.1% by the end of 1965; inflation hovered around 1% a year; and income inequality was the lowest since the 1930s because of a 70% tax on the highest incomes.

The slew of laws he pushed through Congress included two measures of historic importance: the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Both statutes put an end to legal racial segregation and discrimination in the United States.

The Civil Rights law was a showpiece of LBJ's wall-to-wall social betterment agenda: It extended federal minimum wage to millions of unprotected workers and included such measures as an education bill to help disadvantaged students; a provision (later called Medicare) to provide health care for the elderly; a law that increased the funding for the "War on Poverty," a program to increase the employment opportunity for the poor; and even provisions to protect clean air and water, improve the landscaping of highways, and creating the National Foundation of the Arts.

But such was Johnson's political and personal clout that even the shift did not block the passage of the vast majority of the "Great Society" laws. By the time he left the White House, Congress had passed and Johnson had signed into laws an astonishing 96% of his 87 legislative proposals — more than double the percentage that had been achieved by the idolized President Kennedy.

## Passage 4

**The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA)** (P.L. 89-10) was enacted by congress on April 9, 1965, as part of President Lyndon B. Johnson's "War on Poverty." President Johnson, a former teacher, believed that equal access to education was important in enabling children to become productive citizens. This landmark legislation specifically authorized the federal government to equalize educational opportunities of all children by directing federal education dollars to the most disadvantaged children living in poverty. In addition to creating a federal role in directing public education dollars to policy goals, such as eliminating poverty, the ESEA relied on state government to administer funding in order to avoid the criticism of federal control. This resulted in the expansion of state departments of education, and a greater role for the states in making education policy.

Since its inception in 1965, the ESEA has been reauthorized eight times, including the Improving America's School Act (IASA) of 1994 and, most recently, as the **No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001**, which has directed nearly \$13 billion federal dollars toward low-income students under Title I, Part A, to equalize educational opportunities and resources for disadvantaged children. Title I, Part A of NCLB specifically addressed compensating education for disadvantaged children by determining which students are eligible and how much they are eligible to receive. Since there is significant discretion at both the state and local levels, there are variations in amounts per student between the Local Education Associations (LEAs) and schools that have similar demographics. Over time, since the first restatement of the ESEA of 1965, the funding mechanisms have become ever more complicated, and the bureaucracy needed to implement the program has grown significantly.

In September of 2011, in order to support local and state education reform across America, the Obama administration set forth the outlines of a program to show how states can get relief from provisions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act—or No Child Left Behind (NCLB). States can request flexibility from specific NCLB mandates that they believe are stifling reform, if they can show that they are "transitioning students, teachers, and schools to a system aligned with college- and career-ready standards for all students, developing differentiated accountability systems, and undertaking reforms to support effective classroom instruction and school leadership." According to the ESEA Flexibility webpage, the U.S. Department of Education has "invited each State educational agency (SEA) to request flexibility regarding specific requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) in exchange for rigorous and comprehensive State-developed plans designed to improve educational outcomes for all students, close achievement gaps, increase equity, and improve the quality of instruction."



## Passage 5

### The Rise of Suburbs

(Adapted from Lumen Learning)



While the electric streetcar of the late-nineteenth century facilitated the outward movement of the well to do, the seeds of a suburban nation were planted in the mid-twentieth century. At the height of the Great Depression, in 1932, some 250,000 households lost their property to foreclosure. A year later, half of all U.S. mortgages were in default. The foreclosure rate stood at more than a 1,000 per day. In response, FDR's New Deal created the Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC), which began purchasing and refinancing existing mortgages at risk of default. HOLC introduced the amortized mortgage, allowing borrowers to pay back interest

and principle over twenty to thirty years instead of the then standard five-year mortgage that carried large balloon payments at the end of the contract. Though homeowners paid more for their homes under this new system, home-ownership was opened to the multitudes who could now gain residential stability, lower monthly mortgage payments, and accrue equity and wealth as property values rose over time.

Additionally, the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), another New Deal organization, increased access to homeownership by insuring mortgages and protecting lenders from financial loss in the event of a default. Though only slightly more than a third of homes had an FHA backed mortgage by 1964, FHA backed loans had a ripple effect with private lenders granting more and more home loans even to non-FHA backed mortgages. Though started in the midst of the Great Depression, the effects of government programs and subsidies like HOLC and the FHA were fully felt in the postwar economy and fueled the growth of homeownership and the rise of the suburbs.

Though domestic spending programs like HOLC and FHA helped create the outlines of the new consumer economy, United States involvement and the Allied victory in World War II pushed the country out of depression and into a sustained economic boom. Wartime spending exploded and, after the war, sustained spending fueled further growth. Government expenditures provided loans to veterans, subsidized corporate research and development, and built the Interstate Highway System. In the

decades after World War II, business boomed, unionization peaked, wages rose, and sustained growth buoyed a new consumer economy. The Servicemen's Readjustment Act (The G.I. Bill), passed in 1944, offered low-interest home loans, a stipend to attend college, loans to start a business, and unemployment benefits.

The rapid growth of homeownership and the rise of suburban communities helped drive the postwar economic boom. Suburban neighborhoods of single-family homes tore their way through the outskirts of cities. William Levitt built the first Levittown, the archetype suburban community, in 1946 in Long Island, New York. Purchasing mass acreage, "subdividing" lots, and contracted crews to build countless homes at economies of scale, Levitt offered affordable suburban housing to veterans and their families. Levitt became the prophet of the new suburbs, heralding a massive internal migration. The country's suburban share of the population rose from 19.5% in 1940 to 30.7% by 1960. Homeownership rates rose from 44% in 1940 to almost 62% in 1960. Between 1940 and 1950, suburban communities of greater than 10,000 people grew 22.1%, and planned communities grew at an astonishing rate of 126.1%. As historian Lizabeth Cohen notes, these new suburbs "mushroomed in territorial size and the populations they harbored." Between 1950 and 1970, America's suburban population nearly doubled to 74 million, with 83 percent of all population growth occurring in suburban places.

The postwar construction boom fed into countless industries. As manufacturers converted back to consumer goods after the war, and as the suburbs developed, appliance and automobile sales rose dramatically. Flush with rising wages and wartime savings, homeowners also used newly created installment plans to buy new consumer goods at once instead of saving for years to make major purchases. The mass-distribution of credit cards, first issued in 1950, further increased homeowners' access to credit. Fueled by credit and no longer stymied by the Depression or wartime restrictions, consumers bought countless washers, dryers, refrigerators, freezers, and, suddenly, televisions. The percentage of Americans that owned at least one television increased from 12% in 1950 to more than 87% in 1960. This new suburban economy also led to increased demand for automobiles. The percentage of American families owning cars increased from 54% in 1948 to 74% in 1959. Motor fuel consumption rose from some 22 million gallons in 1945 to around 59 million gallons in 1958.

The rise of the suburbs transformed America's countryside as suburban growth reclaimed millions of acres of rural space, turning agrarian communities into suburban landscapes. As suburban homeowners retreated from the cities into new developments, new developments wrenched more and more agricultural workers off the land, often pushing them into the very cities that suburbanites were fleeing.

While suburbanization and the new consumer economy produced unprecedented wealth and affluence, the fruits of this economic and spatial abundance did not reach all Americans equally. The new economic structures and suburban spaces of the postwar period produced perhaps as much inequality as affluence. Wealth created by the booming economy filtered through social structures with built-in privileges and prejudices. Just when many middle and lower class white American families began their journey of upward mobility by moving to the suburbs with the help of government spending and government programs such as the FHA and the GI Bill, many African Americans and other racial minorities found themselves systematically shut out.

Racial minorities could not get loans for property improvements in their own neighborhoods—seen as credit risks—and were denied mortgages to purchase property in other areas for fear that their presence would extend the red line into a new community. Levittown, the poster-child of the new suburban America, only allowed whites to purchase homes. Thus HOLC policies and private developers increased home ownership and stability for white Americans while simultaneously creating and enforcing racial segregation.

The exclusionary structures of the postwar economy pushed African Americans and other minorities to protest. Over time the federal government attempted to rectify the racial segregation created, or at least facilitated, in part by its own policies. In 1948, the U.S. Supreme Court case *Shelley v. Kraemer* struck down explicitly racial neighborhood housing agreements, making it illegal to explicitly consider race when selling a house. It would be years, however, until housing acts passed in the 1960s could provide some federal muscle to complement grassroots attempts to ensure equal access.

During the 1950s and early 1960s many Americans retreated to the suburbs to enjoy the new consumer economy and search for some normalcy and security after the instability of depression and war. But many could not. It was both the limits and opportunities of housing that shaped the contours of postwar American society.