



Social Studies Virtual Learning

U.S. History

Lesson 20

April 17, 2020



US History:

Lesson #20: April 17

What Impact did the Growth of the Interstate Highway System Have on the Nation?

Learning Target: The learner will evaluate the expansion of the interstate highway system and its impact on US movement during the 1950s and 60s.

Warm Up

Cool Facts:

THERE ARE 46,878 MILES OF INTERSTATE HIGHWAYS IN THE UNITED STATES

THERE ARE NO DESIGN RULES DICTATING THE SHAPE OF ROADS.

Click on the link here and watch the video clip then...

How the Interstates Changed America (8:34)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FF4zIAokWhU>

What is one way that interstate highways changed America after 1956?

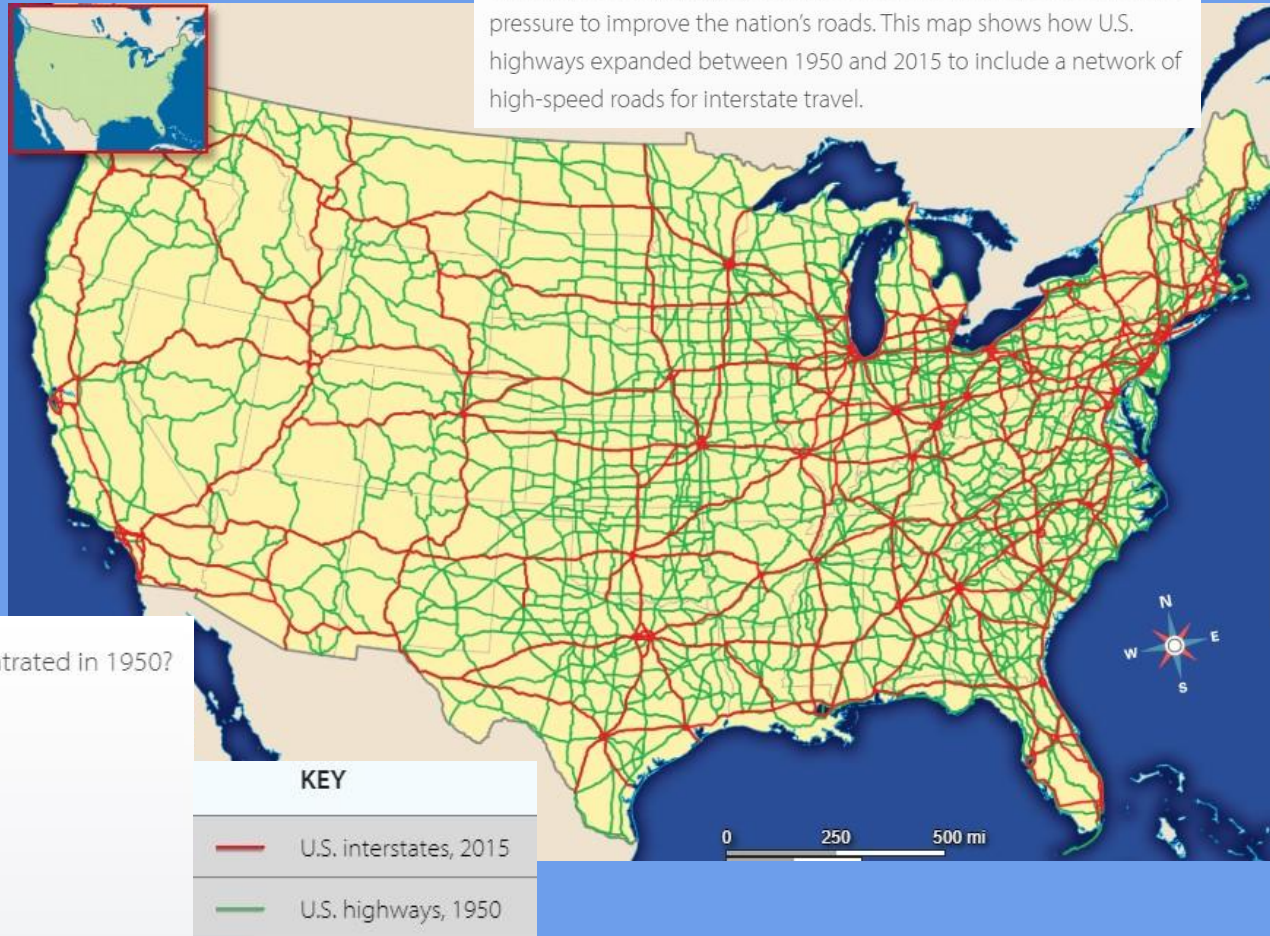
Lesson Activity

Compare the map of US highways in 1950 vs. interstate highways in 2015, then answer the question below on your piece of paper.

Label your paper as Lesson #20, April 17 The Impact of Highways and begin below:

U.S. Highway System, 1950 and 2015

The Interstate Highway System was developed in response to public pressure to improve the nation's roads. This map shows how U.S. highways expanded between 1950 and 2015 to include a network of high-speed roads for interstate travel.



1. **Location** Where were most highways concentrated in 1950?

- A** along the West Coast
- B** in the Southwest
- C** along the East Coast
- D** in the Northwest

Lesson Activity

Read the information here about the development of the Interstate Highway System and answer the questions that follow.

Americans Hit the Road



In the 1950s Americans loved their cars—big, powerful, and flashy. Some car owners spent their leisure time maintaining their automobiles for the daily commute to work or for the annual family vacation on any one of the nation's 22 new interstate highways.

The Interstate Highway System

The more cars there were, the more roads were needed. “Automania” spurred local and state governments to construct roads. These roads linked the major cities while connecting schools, shopping centers, and workplaces to residential suburbs, which were booming along with the population. In 1956 President Eisenhower signed the National Interstate and Defense Highways Act of 1956. The act was funded in 1957 and authorized the building of a nationwide highway network—41,000 miles of expressways. The new roads, in turn, encouraged the development of new suburbs farther from the cities.

Assignment Question:

2. How do you think the interstate highway system changed the nature of travel for many Americans? Explain your answer.

Lesson Activity



Assignment Question:

3. Explain two ways automobiles might have increased American freedom for adults and teenagers during the 1950s and 60s.



Americans Hit the Road



Fast-food restaurants catered to the car culture by offering drive-up service. Waitresses wearing fancy uniforms or roller skates added to the fun of front-seat dining.

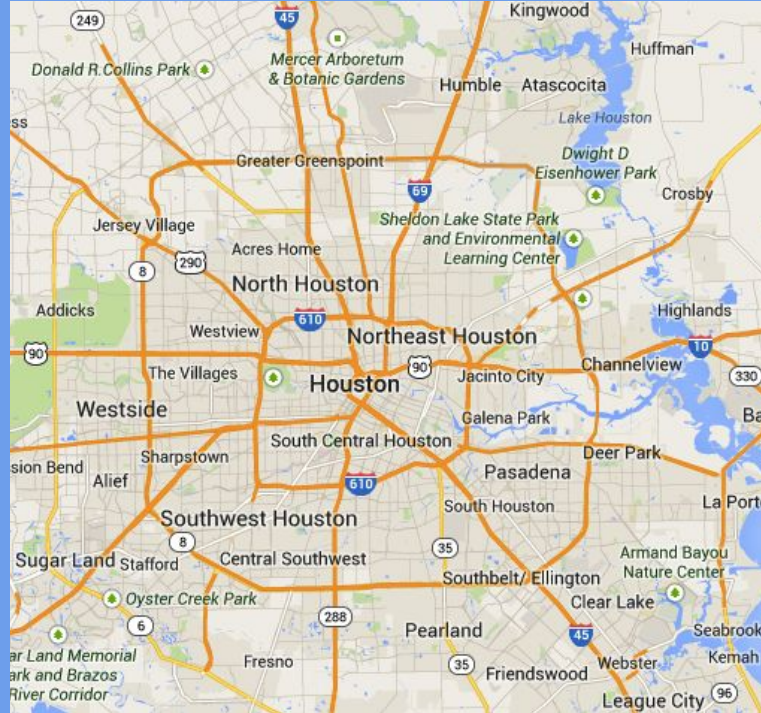


Lesson Activity

Did you know that the interstate highway system is linked to our national defense?

During the cold war, better highways were seen as a necessity to expedite an evacuation from major cities in the event of a nuclear attack or a natural disaster.

Notice how the highways of Houston diverge from the city in different directions and there are two main circular highways that connect these outer areas. (see Interstate 610)



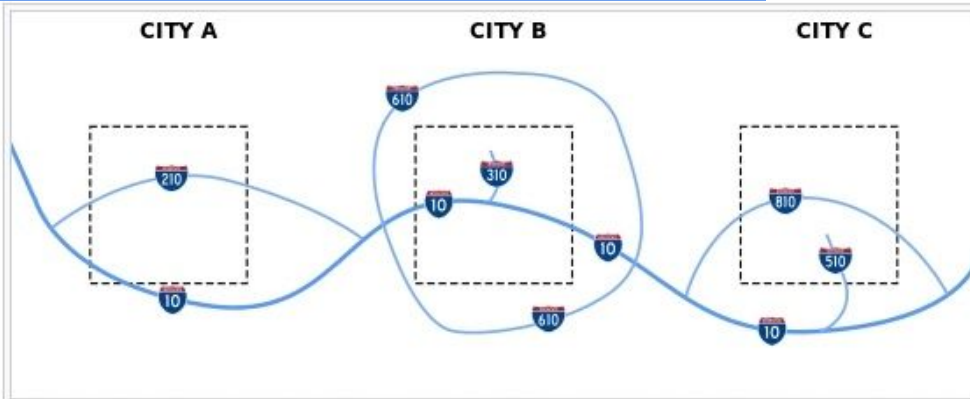
On June 29, 1956, President Dwight Eisenhower signed the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956. The bill created a 41,000-mile "National System of Interstate and Defense Highways" that would, according to Eisenhower, eliminate unsafe roads, inefficient routes, traffic jams and all of the other things that got in the way of "speedy, safe transcontinental travel." At the same time, highway advocates argued, "in case of atomic attack on our key cities, the

road net [would] permit quick evacuation of target areas." For all of these reasons, the 1956 law declared that the construction of an elaborate expressway system was "essential to the national interest."

Lesson Activity



Major two-digit interstates



Examples of the auxiliary Interstate Highway numbering system. An odd hundreds digit means the route connects at only one end to the rest of the interstate system, known as a "spur route". An even hundreds digit means the route connects at both ends, which could be a loop route (which has two termini) or a radial route (known also as a beltway, beltline, or circumferential route).

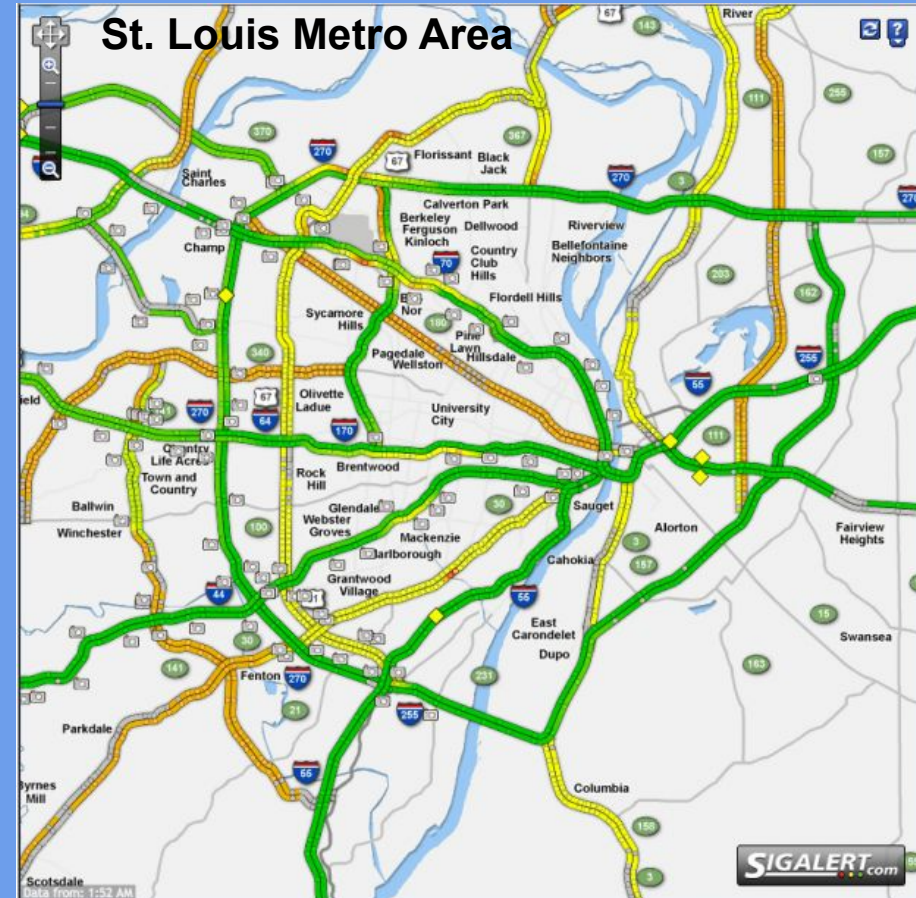
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eLYITVdPi_0

How Do They Number the Interstates (1:31)

Did you know that Odd # interstates run mostly North & South and increase as you look at the map from left to right. Even # interstates run mostly East and West and increase as you look at the map from bottom to the top.

Study the maps here and note how the interstates in Kansas City and St. Louis follow the patterns on the previous slide.

Lesson Activity



Assignment

Continue the assignment started on previous slides for Lesson #20, April 17 Impact of the Highway System. Answer the questions below on your paper.

4. How did the interstate highway system look to benefit the US during the cold war fears of a possible Soviet nuclear attack?
5. In your opinion, have the interstate highways improved our society in the way we move people, goods and ideas? Explain your answer.

Use what you have learned about the development of the interstate system to answer the questions below:

6. Name the interstate highway that travels mainly east and west closest to where you live.
7. Name another parallel interstate that travels mainly east to west that is south of your answer for #6.
8. Name the interstate highway that travels mainly north and south closest to where you live.

Reflection

Thinking Exercise:

After completing this lesson reflect on the questions posed here.

- Think about the interstate highways in our metropolitan area. Did you ever notice which directions they travel? I-70, I-35, I-29, I-435, I-470, I-635
- In what ways are our lives made easier by the Interstate Highway system?
- What changes could be made to improve the Interstate Highway system?

Additional Resources

Check out these links for more information on this topic

- History of the Interstate Highway System (4:14)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7n6g1ypx1PE>
- National Interstate Defense and Highway Act of 1956 (5:36)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NPHe8ET33Hg>
- What if We Built a Road Around the World? Pretty Cool.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PuSkexkHRb0>
- How Highways Wrecked American Cities
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=odF4GSX1y3c>

Answers

1. C

2. How do you think the interstate highway system changed the nature of travel for many Americans?

Answers vary, but may include - Highways made it easier and faster to travel between places. More options also provided people with more freedom.

3. Explain two ways automobiles might have increased American freedom for adults and teenagers during the 1950s and 60s. 1) More people with cars allowed more freedom to travel on their own schedule wherever they wanted to go, 2) this expanded the possibilities for vacations, 3) teens had more opportunities to go places with friends or on dates

4. How did the interstate highway system look to benefit the US during the cold war fears of a possible Soviet nuclear attack? The highway system could be used to allow people to evacuate targeted areas like major cities. It also allowed the military to more quickly move supplies from place to place.

5. In your opinion, have the interstate highways improved our society in the way we move people, goods and ideas? Explain your answer. - Answers will vary, but may include society has been enhanced by the efficiency that people travel and goods are shipped from place to place.

6. Name the interstate highway that travels mainly east and west closest to where you live. I-70

7. Name another parallel interstate that travels mainly east to west that is south of your answer for #6. I-40, I-20, or I-10

8. Name the interstate highway that travels mainly north and south closest to where you live. I-35